

UNSDI Opportunities & Challenges: Ten Random Reflections


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UNSDI Global Partners Meeting

01-02 March 2007

ESA-ESRIN - Frascati - Italy



**“... coordinated consensus-based
and inclusive” UNSDI**

For what purpose?

To meet the organizational responsibilities
of UN agencies and ... interoperability with
national and regional SDI's

Random Thought 1

What should be the ultimate goal of the UNSDI vision?

Perhaps: provide and advance geographic information technologies and systems such that people anywhere can gather the critical data they need for themselves

Random Thought 2

Where will the architectural priority of UNSDI be focused?

1. **Desktop** - software and data on your machine but data may be drawn from anywhere on the web
2. **Multipurpose or database focused** - (a) many users accessing and using same remote database (e.g. spatial appliances) (b) many users potentially drawing from and updating multiple standardized databases
3. **Web services** - stand alone that anyone can access or distributed and shared, highly focused applications

Random Thought 3

Does there exist a next core global dataset that almost all UN agencies would use and be willing to support?

Past and Present: perhaps “gold standards” are gridded population of the world & administrative boundaries

Future: gridded gross domestic product?
comprehensive global roads dataset?
other?

Random Thought 4

Is there a reasonably achievable global data set that could be openly accessible that would provide a base upon which many other data sets could be built?

- creates a no-strings-attached default standard enabling sharing

Random Thought 5

What is the one highest priority web service that almost all UN agencies would want, use, and support?

Random Thought 6

Goal 8 of the Millennium Development Goals includes making the benefits of information technologies more broadly accessible in all developing countries.

Why not make the UNSDI an exemplar in fulfilling that goal?

Average data creator would like to be able to:

- create an ironclad license for her dataset in a minute or less,
- create standards-based metadata in ten minutes or less,
- ensure automated data provenance tracking,
- ensure automated long-term archiving,
- access and contribute to a peer evaluation system.

Random Thought 7

The UNSDI should support both a *Global Commons in Geographic Data and Processing* and a *Global Marketplace in Geographic Data and Processing*.

A. Global Commons

Commons: users know they can use data sets without obtaining prior permission from the data's contributor, as long as any conditions the contributor places on the use of the data are respected.

- Use open approach to intellectual property protection

- 14 Security: use FGDC approach for assessing

B. Global Marketplace

- UNSDI becomes enabler for micro IS business growth on a global basis
- Core data must be open access
- Anyone who sells data through the global marketplace automatically donates it to the commons after a commercially reasonable time, provisionally five years

Random Thought 8

“No current rules of engagement upon which to base cooperation among agencies are believed to exist.”

Advice: keep it simple

Licensing - commons licensing as simple as it gets
Metadata - user needs to create minimally acceptable metadata or doesn't get benefits of the commons or market

Random Thought 9

Is there a geo information capability not yet developed that would be of specific and substantial benefit to poor communities or nations?

If yes, might UNSDI make it happen?

Development Science Prize in Spatial Technologies?

Development Science Prize in Spatial Technologies

Example:

Emergency Response Information System for Self-Organizing Communities in Resource Scarce Parts of the Globe

... to win the \$100,000 prize, your team's operational system must be completed meeting all minimum requirements by the end of the year and excel over all other submissions

... greatest value? mobilizing young people across the globe

Random Thought 10

Is it time for a paradigm shift?

... the process and result of a change in basic assumptions

... a complete change in thinking or belief systems that allows the creation of a new condition previously thought impossible or unacceptable