

Notes from Paso del Norte GIS&T Users Group
25 June 2013 – NMSU, 185 Breland Hall, 2:30-4pm
Drafted 6.25.13, finalized on 7.2.13

Folks did introductions and signed the sign in sheet (copy attached).

Metadata portal and resulting discussion

I then introduced the metadata portal we have developed and did a brief demonstration. I then asked folks for their input on the site and also asked them to provide ideas on how to connect any existing portals that their agencies are hosting. Results follow:

- BLM has an existing portal that shows metadata and provides access to actual datasets. They currently have loaded about 10% of their data, perhaps 150 data sets.
- WRRRI has a similar setup with limited data sets that can be served as shape files. They are very active in transboundary study area, and currency of the data varies a good deal.
- IBWC is active in the area as well; they are working to put up a wide range of GIS data through a Web-mapping server. This is due “any day now,” as they are months behind their Dec 2012 deadline.
- EP Electric also has both public and private data sets that are online. They currently are able to share certain data sets, and even some of their sensitive data sets can be shared on a case-by-case basis. EPE just received their ArcGIS Online ID and are in the process of setting up a GIS portal through that site. The GIS ArcGIS server services are already up and running.

Other issues discussed

- **Updating issues** - agencies will update things on their server as they improve their data. “How will these updates be handled?” Delbert asks a very good question. Ray suggests that we come together 2 times per year in person to share data updates with the group, and we can then update the metadata entries that we have. Tim Pitts has some good ideas on this based on his work with municipalities, and I will explore this with him offline.
- **Wish list** - Ben asks if we can make a wish list, and I invited him and others to share these ideas with me via email.
- **Online chat function/list serve** - Liz also asks if we can support some form of chat function that folks can use to ask for data sets that they need. Ray would not be able to participate, but what about keywords that can be shared through some form of online tool?

Access issues

Access issues generated much discussion. Everyone is fine with sharing their data with members of the group, but most people did NOT want the list of players and their access information in front of the login for totally open public access. They also want their agency metadata behind the login. Ray asks if we can have different levels of users that would have different types of access. His concern is with two things:

- 1) people harassing users for data to mine, compile and sell to other users, and
- 2) very sensitive data that would only be shared with people that have a legitimate need to use the data.

Most folks felt that these concerns can mostly be handled by putting the report generation tool behind the login. Ben and Ray like this type of solution, while Tim would only enter metadata for things he is willing to share and have it open to the public.

My idea is to add a question to the actual data entry form that says "open to public or open to the UG only." We could then use this item as a filter when we run reports to limit what people see. Alternately, if we secure everything behind a login, we can run with the existing question on restrictions to data access.

Liz asks if this is just a casual user group to share ideas and perspectives with people, or a more robust group that cooperates on data sharing and acquisition. This group will be what the active people want it to be, and this will evolve over time. There was MAJOR interest in exploring all of these areas with the group, and we will move through lower order things first, then on to larger efforts. Ray offers to host meetings in the future; this brings up the idea of rotating the meeting venue over time, perhaps 4 times/year?

Update on CLC GIS&T operations

Tim Pitts shared with us what is happening with the CLC. In the past, the city's GIS effort seemed to lack direction, with no willingness to share. Recently, they moved to a somewhat centralized function, and the city then went to a new model of putting expertise in key units in the city.

Matt Anderson has joined the Utilities team (Tim will get his contact information to me), Public Works should be hired in the next few weeks, and the last piece is a DB person working for IT. They have a GIS advisory committee that is working on a vision concerning where GIS should be going in the future, and they will be developing a strategic plan in the near future. Tim is optimistic for the future, and he is also very willing to share data with various people and agencies. Tim also sees problems with working across regional boundaries, the "white space problem" that we regularly face. He is willing to work with any group to help deal with this issue. I will insure that we invite NMSU's Facilities and Services office to the next meeting, as they are the official GIS data holder for NMSU, at least as far as GIS data about NMSU facilities and land holdings.

Meeting was formally adjourned at 4pm, yet people stayed for about 30 minutes discussing a range of issues. We did NOT get to the item on Future data sharing opportunities and tools with Timothy Pitts and Randy Carr; this will be item #1 on fall meeting.