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## Policies, Open Access and Cooperation as Factors Influencing Geospatial Collections in Libraries and Institutional Repositories

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to explore whether in today's changing landscape libraries institutional repositories are used, in order to develop collections of locally produced geospatial data. Furthermore, this study will explore the use of policies in developing geospatial collections in order to reveal whether this tool is necessary for librarians who deal with geospatial collections. Finally, it will also detect the role of cooperation in respect to the development of geospatial collections.

This research is addressed to librarians working on geospatial collections so as to ascertain their perceptions since they are considered to be the professionals leading changes. The results demonstrate that Map/GIS libraries, along with analog geospatial collections, tend to develop collections from the data their academic community produces. Librarians seem to be convinced that the formulation of policies, the open access to the data, and the establishment of cooperation among stakeholders will be the critical points to accomplish this goal.

### Introduction

A large number of libraries are collecting a variety of different types of digital geographical data such as aerial views, atlases, data series, remotely sensed images, city foreign maps, topographic profiles etc. The subject categories, which a library chooses to offer to its users include both physical and human geography while the most usual formats are CDs, DVDs, microforms (Vardakosta & Kapidakis, 2012). Technical advances (such as mobile phones, internet, mash-ups and sensors) have also contributed in the production, and the use of geospatial information in digital format, making the management and the organization of this data particularly challenging (Craglia & Shanley, 2015; Porcal-Gonzalo, 2015). At the same time, the volumes of data being generated by researchers are growing rapidly, and research funders are increasingly likely to require researchers to deposit their research data since the society as a whole benefits from access to the fruits of publicly-funded research (Lewis, 2012). Faculty produces voluminous amounts of digital geospatial data in a range of heterogeneous formats in order to complete research projects and to use within classrooms (Hanson & Levin, 2003, p. 53). Consequently, managing geospatial data sets, which are locally produced in their universities are emerging roles for librarians (Clemons, 2015). As they already organize and provide geographical information, curate digital collections, and are active in

establishing web archives, libraries become involved in research and dissemination of knowledge in new ways (Kruse & Thestrup, 2014). Many libraries, particularly in the western world, are building Institutional Repositories (IRs) to house the intellectual product of their communities. However, they have expanded their services into the realm of research data to meet the needs of researchers who want to ensure that their data should be visible, accessed, and also cited in the long term, by increasing, at the same time, their own reputation in the academia.

The aim of this paper is to explore whether in today's changing landscape, libraries are using their IRs for developing collections of locally produced geospatial data. Furthermore, the study will explore the use of policies in developing geospatial collections in order to reveal whether this tool is necessary for librarians that deal with geospatial collections. Finally, it will also detect the role of cooperation in respect to the development of geospatial collections. Issues like policies, open access and cooperation consist nowadays some of the primary elements discussed in international bibliography that need to be developed in order to address the complex issues related to access and support of geospatial data. Librarians, as leaders in information knowledge and access, must be the ones pushing this change to e-resources and managing it appropriately (Cerbo, 2012). That's why the research is addressed to Map/GIS librarians working on geospatial collections so as

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to ascertain their perceptions since they are considered to be the professionals leading changes in the field of geographical information.

We anticipate that the results will shed light on the current situation in geospatial collections' landscape and will emphasize the emergence of actions that libraries should undertake in order to increase access to scientific data and ensure that value-added services are generated to their patrons.

This paper is organized in sections. At first, we will introduce the conceptual framework of the research while making a literature review regarding previous work about the geographical collections will be reviewing. Afterwards, the methodology that was followed towards research construction (research instrument, pilot distribution) and the means were used for its distribution will be presented in detail. Then, the results will be provided in both descriptive and statistical analysis, while the findings will be further discussed.

### Conceptual framework

As academic libraries support the university's student population and aid faculty research and teaching are the main allies to their patrons and their guides to scholarly publishing (Willinsky & Alperin, 2011). In today's academic world, researcher's scholarly publication and citation counts and they are often used as key indicators, for measuring researcher's academic skills and productivity while at the same time, increasing their work visibility (Brown & Abbas, 2010). At the institutional level, publication counts and citations metrics are strongly tied to evaluate the quality and prestige of academic institutions (Zhao, 2014). Additionally, the gathering of locally produced geospatial data can enable their reuse by other organizations contributing that way in cost savings and increasing, at the same time, the visibility of the work that has already been done, while improvements and error corrections in data could be a feedback given by users (Brown & Abbas, 2010).

In the early years of GIS collections Lamont and Marley (1998) pointed out the lack of collection development policies. In today's library environment, in order for this procedure to be effective and for the collection to be developed, a well-thought – out data management and collection development policies must be defined (Steinhart, 2006). IRs can be seen as the epicentre for open access initiatives for the institution (Bowering Mullen, 2011b) and as Olson (2010) claims, they can act as a clearinghouse for the local produced geospatial datasets providing a long term preservation (e.g. INSIDE Idaho, Florida Geographic Data Library). Thus, the universities themselves are formulating their own internal policies regarding research data (Burpee & Fernandez, 2013; Jeonghyun, 2013; Kruse & Thestrup, 2014) while it would be important to leverage its potential to be considered as the “place to go” for innovative scholarly communication (Bowering Mullen, 2011b).

Collection development with open access materials requires a different skill set (Bowering Mullen, 2011a) and furthermore the creation of geospatial data policies which will serve as a guide to the stakeholders and will increase its efficiency. In this framework collaborations and partnerships are also critical for supporting the stewardship of geospatial data within communities and organizations (Downs, 2015). Collaborations can greatly contribute to the success of GIS libraries while some of the benefits can be summarized in finance, expertise and networking (Hoover, 2012). For instance Forward, Leahey, and Trimble (2015) describe the Scholars Geportal project (an Ontario-wide geospatial data infrastructure available to all Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL)), and argue that this successful collaboration had as a result a better description of geospatial data, richer collections and a sustainable infrastructure.

A variety of library organizations (e.g. ALA-MAGIRT, LIBER, IFLA) consider policies as one of the primary elements need to be developed to address the complex issues related to access and support to research data that academic community produces. European Commission with

HORIZON 2020, INSPIRE, RECODE and as well as the OECD, prepare guidelines for research data management, being similar to European Horizon 2020, and the Australian Government through the Australian Research Council has established an Open Access Policy for researchers.<sup>1</sup> On February 2016, the Cyprus Republic approved the “Cyprus National Policy of Open Access”<sup>2</sup> while the Polish Ministry of Digitization is currently finalizing its open data program.<sup>3</sup> Research Council in UK has launched the “Concordat on Open Research Data”<sup>4</sup> a set of expectations of best practices developed by the research community itself, reflecting their needs. Similarly “Portage”<sup>5</sup> in Canada produced a white paper for the broad research data management community which explores options for the design of a coordinated, national discovery service for research data in Canada. According to the Horizon 2020 Programme<sup>6</sup> these Guidelines should include information on:

- the handling of research data during and after the end of the project,
- which data will be collected, processed and/or generated,
- which methodology and standards will be applied,
- whether data will be shared/made open access, and
- how data will be curated and preserved (including after the end of the project).

Saunders (2015) in her research for the highly prioritized issues for academic libraries revealed “collections”, “institutional repositories”, and “collaboration”, as issues with major emphasis in strategic directions of universities, while “data management” and “open access” are listed as “additional areas of emphasis”. Association of College and Research Libraries’ (ACRL) Research Planning and Review Committee 2015 document on top trends in academic libraries includes “data”, “openness in higher education”, and “partnerships” while in the same document for 2016 “research data services” (RDS), along with “data policies and data management” have been added.

In this context librarians are the professionals who are faced with new responsibilities and the ones that lead changes to supply valuable resources and information to their university community (Cerbo, 2012; Woolfrey & Fry, 2015). These novel services require a range of new skills and expertise within the library community as well as a shift in organizational models for libraries (Schmidt et al., 2016). In this climate of change, the Joint Task Force on Librarians' Competencies in Support of e-Research and Scholarly Communication<sup>7</sup> released on June 2016 “Librarians' Competencies Profile for Scholarly Communication and Open Access”<sup>8</sup> and “Librarians' Competencies for Research Data Management”<sup>9</sup>.

The main question which raises from all the above and leads our research is whether, according to librarians, geospatial collections have been affected by these challenges, and aligned to the new trends for their patrons benefit. This study is a contribution to the literacy regarding geospatial collections and more particularly to those related to IRs sustaining local geospatial data.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.arc.gov.au/arc-open-access-policy>.

<sup>2</sup> <http://goo.gl/KRUYeJ> [in Greek].

<sup>3</sup> <https://goo.gl/PZriLq>.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/documents/concordatonopenresearchdata-pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Portage network launched 2014 by the Canadian Association of Research Libraries. It works within the library community to coordinate expertise, services and technology in research data management (<https://portagenetwork.ca>).

<sup>6</sup> [ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants\\_manual/hi/oa/pilot/h2020-hi-oa-data-mgy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/oa/pilot/h2020-hi-oa-data-mgy_en.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> In August 2013, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL), the Association of European Research Libraries (LIBER), and the Confederation of Open Access Repositories (COAR) launched the Joint Task Force on Librarians' Competencies in Support of e-Research and Scholarly Communication (Schmidt et al., 2016).

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.coar-repositories.org/files/Competencies-for-ScholComm-and-OA\\_June-2016.pdf](https://www.coar-repositories.org/files/Competencies-for-ScholComm-and-OA_June-2016.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.coar-repositories.org/files/Competencies-for-RDM\\_June-2016.pdf](https://www.coar-repositories.org/files/Competencies-for-RDM_June-2016.pdf).

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