Important updates to the Geospatial Technology Competency Model (GTCM)

(Reprinted with permission from Esri’s Education Blog)

Important updates to the Geospatial Technology Competency Model (GTCM) document have just been published by the US Department of Labor. This article summarizes the updates and reminds the reader what the GTCM is and why it is important to the GIS education community.

This is the most extensive revision to the GTCM in 15 years and was much needed given all that has changed in GIS, society, and education during that time. Esri has been proud to serve on the advisory board for over 15 years to the GeoTech Center, a initiative of community colleges that was instrumental in creating the original GTCM and for maintaining it. I and my team’s longstanding collaboration with the GeoTech Center has led to fruitful research and instructional opportunities, most recently a week-long GIS DEI institute for educators, held in Gettysburg Pennsylvania.

The model provides a structure or framework for developing the personal effectiveness, academic, and workplace competencies required by an industry or an occupation, in this case, GIS. The Building Blocks Model is portrayed as a helpful graphic to help users quickly grasp the key features of the competencies required. The pyramid shape conveys the increasing level of specificity and specialization of the content on the upper tiers of the graphic.

The GTCM describes how GIS occupational and industry competencies build on a foundation of personal effectiveness, academic, and workplace competencies. It is represented as a pyramid with nine tiers. Each tier consists of blocks representing the skills, knowledge, and abilities essential for successful performance in the GIS industry.

At the base of the model, competencies apply to a large number of occupations and industries. As a user moves up the model, the competencies become industry- and occupation-specific. In the case of the GTCM, it specifies competencies required for worker success in the geospatial industry, from the most general “Personal Effectiveness Competencies” (Tier 1) to the sector-specific competencies presented in Tier 5.

How could you use the GTCM? Instructors can use it to provide career guidance, as a guideline to plan their future curriculum, courses, and programs, to assess existing GIS courses and programs, for recruitment and hiring, as criteria for professional development or for voluntary certification, and to frame outreach efforts intended to communicate characteristics of the geospatial technology to the wider community. I use it frequently in presentations that focus on where GIS is heading, and also in career discussions with students. My favorite part of the GTCM might be the bottom tier, the personal effectiveness competencies, where I focus on these questions: Are you organized? Are you ethical? Can you deal with data? In short...

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I have cited the GTCM more frequently than just about any other document over the past 20 years, along with the National Research Council's Learning to Think Spatially report.

GTCM users should keep in mind that the pyramid framework is not intended to suggest a sequence of competency attainment or that certain competencies are of greater value or higher skill than others. The body of the GTCM is a table that contains definitions and associated key behaviors for each competency block depicted in the pyramid.

The competencies throughout the model were recently updated and published based on feedback from industry subject matter experts and public comments received on the model. Recent updates included updating existing competencies, deleting items particularly in terms of tools that are no longer applicable, and adding competencies that have appeared with the rapid evolution of GIS tools and workflows.

For example, the competency 2.6.2.2 of “Express information to individuals or groups taking into account the audience and the nature of the information (e.g., explain technical concepts to non-technical audiences),” was tightened to: Communicate effectively to any audience. This critical work function was deleted: 4.1.4.4 Compare the capabilities and limitations of various sensor types in the context of project requirements. And now reads as 4.1.4.6: Compare the capabilities and limitations of various sensor platforms such as satellites, terrestrial, aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

The revised GTCM can be found here: https://www.careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel/competency-models/pyramid-download.aspx?industry=geospatial.

Here, you can also access the model in the following worksheet formats: PDF and Excel, and access the Credential Competencies Worksheet, the Curriculum Analysis Worksheet, the Employer Analysis Worksheet, and the Gap Analysis Worksheet.

On a related note, Rodney Jackson and I recently published an article in Transactions in GIS where we examine the perspectives of practitioners toward the GTCM, as a result of a survey we conducted of 61 GIS professionals and others, here: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tgis.13087

I look forward to your feedback!

Author
Joseph Kerski, PhD, GISP
Esri Education Manager
I believe that spatial thinking can transform education and society through the application of Geographic Information Systems for instruction, research, administration, and policy. I hold 3 degrees in Geography, have served at NOAA, the US Census Bureau, and USGS as a cartographer and geographer, and teach a variety of F2F (Face to Face) (including T3G) and online courses. I have authored a variety of books and textbooks about the environment, STEM, GIS, and education. These include “Interpreting Our World”, “Essentials of the Environment”, “Tribal GIS”, “The GIS Guide to Public Domain Data”, “International Perspectives on Teaching and Learning with GIS In Secondary Education”, “Spatial Mathematics” and others. I write for 2 blogs, 2 monthly podcasts, and a variety of journals, and have created over 5,000 videos on the Our Earth YouTube channel. Yet, as time passes, the more I realize my own limitations and that this is a lifelong learning endeavor and thus I actively seek mentors and collaborators.
URISA Adopts Call to Climate Action

Submitted by: URISA Climate and Community Resilience Committee

As the leading professional organization for GIS professionals, URISA has long supported climate and community resilience efforts. The association has delivered 20 years of GIS emergency management and response and resilience efforts across the globe through GIS-Corps, to leading development and supporting sustainability and community resilience data efforts, conference sessions, training, and workshops and with the establishment of a dedicated Climate and Community Resilience Committee. To further strengthen its commitment, the URISA Board of Directors set the bar for the GIS community to do its part in the climate emergency and support communities and GIS professionals in their work when it adopted a Call to Climate Action on October 4, 2023.

Teresa Townsend, AICP (URISA Past President, Co-chair of URISA’s Climate and Community Resilience Committee (CCRC) and Climate Change and Climate Equity Working Group Chair), explaining the Call to Action to the URISA Board, stated that “GIS professionals are uniquely positioned to support and build a sustainable and equitable future by leveraging our combined geospatial skills, knowledge, and resources. URISA committees and work groups have been working on climate issues for several years, but we wanted to get our entire organization on board in support of climate actions.”

The Climate and Community Resilience Committee began developing the Call to Climate Action over the summer which was finalized and adopted by the URISA Board this fall. The Call delineates the areas where the overall organization can make positive changes in its daily operations to reduce its organization carbon footprint.

What URISA is doing as an Organization

URISA stands as an organization in supporting the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals. We believe that mapping the world around us is about understanding the complex connections that link people, communities, and planet and that we as a profession can use GIS for Good.

Understanding these connections uniquely positions us as GIS professionals, educators, students, and community members to support and build a sustainable future while upholding climate equity, through a concerted effort that leverages our combined knowledge, skills, and resources.

URISA has a unique opportunity to leverage its expertise in GIS to support community resiliency and climate change.

The adopted URISA Call to Climate Action includes 13 specific strategies:

- **Green Operations**: Implement green practices within the day-to-day functioning of URISA, such as minimizing paper use, reducing energy consumption, promoting remote work, and making sustainable choices for the organization.
- **Partner for the Planet**: For greater impact, collaborate on climate initiatives, pooling resources, and expertise for greater impact to model best practices for other individuals, educational institutions, organizations, businesses, and government agencies. Create synergies that can drive effective climate action and amplify our collective efforts.
- **Climate Advocacy**: In collaboration with the URISA Policy Advisory Committee, the Climate and Community Resilience Committee identifies potential legislation and advocates for policies that encourage sustainable practices and prioritize climate action, using GIS data to inform and support these advocacy efforts.
- **GIS Community Engagement**: Engage local communities in climate action projects, providing them with the necessary GIS knowledge and resources to make informed decisions and support advocacy efforts.
- **Research Support**: Support climate-related research by providing GIS resources, data, and expertise.
- **Professional Development**: Promote professional development programs that focus on the intersection of GIS, climate change, sustainability, and resilience, to prepare the next generation of GIS professionals who tackle ongoing and future climate challenges.
- **Events & Conferences**: Minimize the carbon footprint of events and conferences by using digital platforms, choosing eco-friendly venues, providing plant-based meal options, and offsetting any unavoidable emissions. In venue contracts, specify that unused foods be donated to food banks.
- **GIS Policy for Climate & Community Resiliency**: Use the powerful insights provided by GIS to advocate for climate-supportive policies at the local, national, and global level.
- **Digital First Approach**: Minimize paper usage by digitizing documents, promoting online resources and events, and opting for digital communication methods whenever feasible.
• **Promote Green Transport:** Encourage staff, members, and event attendees to use public transport, cycling, walking, or carpooling to reduce transportation-related emissions.

• **Renewable Energy:** URISA will offset office emissions by supporting renewable energy credits for remote/office operations.

• **Grant Opportunities:** The Climate and Community Resilience Committee identifies potential grant opportunities that resilience initiatives. URISA can apply for to provide enhanced GIS community resources and support, educational and professional development opportunities for our members, and research to advance climate and community resilience initiatives.

• **Climate & Sustainability Education:** Develop and offer educational programs on the intersection of GIS and climate science, enhancing awareness of climate change, climate equity, the UN Sustainable Development goals, and providing practical skills for action.

In addition to the commitment for specific actions, URISA creates event-based and other activities to support climate and community resilience initiatives.

To celebrate its 60th anniversary in 2022, URISA participants planted 1,014 trees during the GIS Pro conference in Boise. The trees were donated by attendees and others in partnership with several tree planting nonprofits and local communities. At the same conference, the URISA Climate Change and Climate Equity Working Group featured a conference session presented by GIS-Pro Keynote Speaker, Breece Robertson and Teresa Townsend, “Taking Climate Action and Achieving a Carbon Neutral Future, which presented nature-based solutions to support climate action at local, regional, national, and global scales. We demonstrated how protecting or restoring ecosystems and creating parks and open spaces that provide health and climate resilience benefits could provide a third of the mitigation benefits needed to meet carbon reduction goals, and how GIS professionals have a tremendous opportunity to contribute by identifying where these solutions will make the biggest impact and tracking and verifying those impacts into the future.

At the 2021 GIS Pro conference in Baltimore, we delivered a half-day workshop titled “Net Positive! Giving Back to Baltimore Through Climate Action Planning.” The interactive workshop achieved two goals: educating participants about climate change GIS and making meaningful contributions to the active City of Baltimore’s Climate Action Plan update. Participants defined data gaps, investigated how climate affects Baltimore’s populations, especially related to equity and climate justice, cultures, and geographic areas; and explored possible climate mitigation and adaptation strategies.

In addition to communication and education, the Climate and Community Resilience Committee is in the process of building our Data and Resource Library to share relevant climate and resilience data and tools with our GIS community. We are currently seeking your insight in compiling case examples/resources of existing and new data, tools, policies, programs, and projects relating to climate

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Here’s what you can do:

- **Plant Trees**
  - Join our annual tree-planting competition! With every tree we plant, we reinforce our commitment to climate and sustainability.

- **Offset Carbon**
  - Offsetting personal or travel carbon emissions for work or URISA events is an important step in mitigating our impact on the environment.

- **Climate or Resilience Action**
  - Share how you are taking climate or resilience action!

  - **Plant a tree**
  - **Share Offset!**
  - **Share Action!**
change, climate equity, and resilience. Share your case studies and other resources.

You can contribute here:

How Can You TAKE ACTION?
URISA wants to support its members in making climate-smart choices. Visit our new “Take Climate Action” dashboard to learn about what you can do and share the climate actions you are taking.

Annual Tree Planting Competition: (NEW Competition Starts in January 2024!): Building upon the successful tree planting efforts started by Kara Utter, for URISA’s 60th Anniversary, we are creating an annual year-round tree planting challenge. Each year, a goal will be established and with every tree we plant, we reinforce our commitment to climate and community resilience. More details about the competition will be available soon!

Offset Carbon Year-Round Challenge: Offsetting personal or travel carbon emissions for work or URISA events is an important step in mitigating our environmental impact. We will be tracking our collective carbon offsets on the new dashboard!

Climate or Resilience Action: Share how you are taking climate or resilience action! Top contributors will be recognized during the annual conference!

Get involved!
URISA, the Climate and Community Resilience Committee and its working groups are always looking for more volunteers! If you would like to get involved – visit here!

27th GIS/Valuation Technologies Conference

April 8-11, 2024 - Charlotte, North Carolina
Co-hosted by URISA and the International Association of Assessing Officers

Schedule:
• Monday, April 8: Workshops & Training, Networking
• Tuesday, April 9: Keynote Address, Breakout Sessions, Exhibition, Hosted Lunch, Networking
• Wednesday, April 10: Breakout Sessions, Lunch & Learn, Exhibition, Lightning Talks, Networking
• Thursday, April 11: Breakout Sessions, Keynote Address, Networking, NEW: Afternoon Workshops & Training

Registration - Early bird discounts will be available until February 12!

Details are posted here.
As young professionals look to enter the geospatial workforce, working for the government (also known as the public sector) may be an undervalued option. Privately owned companies, or the private sector, certainly stand out with innovation, high pay, fancy offices and more. However, the public sector has its own upsides that shouldn’t be ignored when considering a new career or a career transition.

**Pay**

While the primary concern about the public sector is lower pay, many government agencies are aware of this drawback and are either actively working to increase compensation to draw candidates or are making sure the benefits act as a buffer to the lower annual salary. This is called total compensation and should be evaluated for any new job, not just in the public sector! Within the public sector, it’s important to consider pay differences between federal, state, and local agencies, where different agencies may have surprisingly competitive pay. Public sector also often gets more guaranteed days off per year, with generous time off increasing with seniority.

Some may see the high mandatory contribution to a pension account that some public sector positions require as a pay cut, but the equal match from the employer needs to be tallied as an increase to your total compensation (and ensures you are making good progress towards retirement). For example, the position may mandate a 10% contribution, but it also provides a 10% match. This increases the total compensation by 10%. Though this is not financial advice, this kind of match is not as common in the private sector and as a young professional the potential of compound growth of money invested in the first 10 years of a career should not be taken lightly!

Young professionals should also consider the benefit of student loan forgiveness that some public sectors offer as part of total compensation, as average student loan debt unfortunately rises to new heights. Programs like Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) offer loan forgiveness to those who work in U.S. government, as well as those in Tribal government, not-for-profits, or the military. In addition to financial relief, public sectors often provide valuable opportunities for further professional development, including paid attendance at conventions, workshops, access to online courses or tuition reimbursement. Notably, public sectors tend to allocate more resources to the ongoing training and development of their employees, recognizing that such investments contribute to longer retention rates and a more skilled and resilient workforce.

**Flexibility**

Another key consideration should be that work-life balance seems more common in the public sector. The public sector rarely requires or even allows overtime, and the primary deadlines are often for annual reporting in comparison to the private sector where project deadlines may be unexpected and require as much overtime as needed to complete a project where the finances of the company hang in the balance. Additionally, many agencies offer the benefit of a 9/80 schedule, where employees are offered the opportunity to work 9 hours a day rather than 8 for an extra day off every two weeks. Of course, there is nuance - public sector deadlines can be just as stressful if there are staffing limits and low budgets, and private sector employers can create a healthy culture that avoids burnout.

While the public sector was historically not known for stellar work-from-home and hybrid arrangements, the pandemic radically changed how agencies were able to operate. This new reality of remote work has often become a perk that different agencies use to compete for new talent, so those looking for work-from-home positions can likely find something for them in the public sector.

**Growth**

For young professionals, the perception that the public sector workforce is older on average may give them pause but should be evaluated for its upsides. Many older professionals understand the need for work-life balance and time-off for dealing with unexpected life events, as they want that for themselves. The high number of employees nearing retirement in the public sector could provide an early opportunity for upward movement. In a large agency, a few retirements can cascade through the whole agency giving many employees an opportunity for upward movement in the coming years.

Young professionals bring new knowledge to all industries, but it is often much needed in the public sector and is a great opportunity for recognition. In the right public sector position, a young professional could be in the perfect spot to build a cutting-edge geospatial program from the ground up where new technology had been lacking. As agencies begin to adopt newer technology (asset management, digital twins, GNSS asset locating, IoT feeds & sensors, and more) opportunities abound for expanding
a geospatial program that may have previously been pigeon-holed into the role of map-making or addressing.

**Bottom Line**
Beyond the quantifiable things the public sector also offers the qualitative benefit of knowing that your work positively impacts the citizens in your area. This can bring an increased sense of purpose to your job and can make you feel connected to your local area in ways that other private sector GIS jobs may not. Though the negatives of the public sector shouldn’t be ignored (politicization of work, budget uncertainty, and rigid pay grades, to name a few) the positives can be very rewarding and contribute to better professional satisfaction. A young professional can certainly have a rewarding, long-lasting career in the public sector.

**URISA GIS Leadership Academy**

Registration is open for the GIS Leadership Academy in Seattle and Fort Worth next year. Grab your spot early!

Meet the Latest Graduates of URISA’s GIS Leadership Academy in Denver!

It was a great week. Thank you to John Nolte, Thad Dymkowski, Xan Fredericks, Steve Steinberg, and Randal Krejcarek for their expertise as faculty members.

And details will soon be announced for the Advanced GIS Leadership Academy which will debut in Chicago in August. Stay tuned!
You are a leader
Whether you know it or not. Whether you want to be one or not…

by Jim Bouchard

• You inspire people—whether you know it or not.
• You empower people, sometimes even if you’re not trying to.
• You guide people—whether you want to or not.

What is your definition of “leader?” Before you go any further, let’s see if you’re singing in harmony. If not—there’s no point in pursuing this venture any further. Here’s the definition adopted for this article. Let’s see if you fundamentally agree…

A leader is simply someone with the ability to attract WILLING followers. And again, whether you know it or not or whether you’re willing or not, there are people who follow your lead of their own free will.

The best leaders are people with the will to serve their followers and give them the tools they need to make their lives better.

Something else we should make clear is that you need no specific number of followers to be a leader. You can lead one or you can lead millions. And you can change the world for the better or cause incredible damage by your influence on just one person.

Leadership is a responsibility. And it’s a responsibility we all share. What defines us as leaders is whether or not we choose to accept or attempt to shirk our responsibility—and in which direction we decide to lead.

Let’s dig a little deeper into the fundamentals. These are the Essential Disciplines of the Leader…

Inspire…
You touch other people’s hearts. Whether you know it or not and whether you want to or not.

You can inspire love or fear. You can make someone’s heart or break it. If you’ve been on this planet for any significant time, you’ve probably done both.

Empower…
You give people tools. Again, whether you know it or want to, you share many things with people. One of the most important ways to empower others is to encourage them—and you do. The bigger question is what, exactly, are you encouraging others to do?

Guide…
You show the way. Through your words, your actions, and who you choose to take under your wing. It’s a fact. Someone looks to you for guidance—whether you know it or not, whether you choose to or not. Where are you guiding them?

You are a leader. You might not be the boss.
That’s the excuse heard most often by people who still hesitate or even refuse to accept that they are leaders. That excuse supports the toughest argument still faced when trying to change people’s minds about leadership. The plain fact is that some people cling to one or more of the following beliefs:

• Leaders are born—not made.
• Not everyone is cut out to be a leader.
• Everyone can’t be the leader.
• There are too many leaders and not enough followers.

First of all, you might not be the boss. Leadership has nothing to do with rank, title or position of authority. It has to do with how you Inspire, Empower and Guide others.

Everyone knows tremendous leaders who have no title or rank. These people usually have little power or authority in the traditional sense, but they have influence. They inspire, empower, and guide people—sometimes even those at the top. If you doubt that, watch “Undercover Boss” sometime.

And of course, you all know people with incredible power and authority who just plain suck as leaders. you all know people who have the rank or the title but little or no respect, trust, or loyalty from the people “below” them.

Let’s address some of those excuses:
Leaders are born. In fact, everyone is a born leader. Many of the mental health issues faced are due to a significant degree of the real or perceived inability to influence others at any given time. If you don’t make a difference in other people’s lives, you do not feel healthy.

Having said that—while everyone is born into this legacy of leadership, it takes a lot of work to be a good leader. And for the best leaders, this work never ends. The most effective leaders are those who accept that perfection is not a destination, but a never-ending process. The best of the best is obsessed with continual self-improvement as a leader and as a person.

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But “everyone can’t be the leader.” This one can get a little complicated.

The traditional model of command and control is dead. It is now understood that the roles of leader and follower are not fixed positions, but rather dynamic roles. In the aforementioned self-directed teams, people flow back and forth in these roles seamlessly depending on the situation and the talents, skills, and experience needed to take charge or manage decisions at any given time.

Everyone can’t be “the” leader. But anyone can be “the leader” in the right situation.

Some will still say that there are too many leaders. Leaders are people who inspire, empower, and guide others to their very best—people like you. We can never have enough.

About the Author:
Jim Bouchard is an internationally recognized speaker, Leadership Activist, and founder of The SENSEI LEADER Movement™. He’s the author of 8 leadership books, and hosts Walking The Walk, a podcast highlighting compassionate, engaged leaders from all areas of business, diverse cultures and experiences. Jim’s programs are an inspirational and interactive exploration into the importance of human-centric leadership. To bring Jim to your organization or event, visit www.ArmstrongSpeakers.com.
Recap of GIS-Pro 2023 from our Young Professional Scholarship Recipients

**Jordan Landrum:** It was an honor to be able to attend GIS-Pro 2023 in Columbus, Ohio as a recipient of the Dr. Marilyn O’Hara Ruiz Young Professional Scholarship. As a recent college graduate new to GIS professional organizations, this experience provided invaluable insights into the mission, initiatives, groups, and individuals that define URISA.

Throughout the week, a balance of professional development and networking unfolded. Engaging sessions provided insights into the latest developments in the geospatial industry, offering a unique opportunity to connect with experts and peers.

I was able to attend a variety of sessions from Modeling Water and Wetlands, A Tale of Two Cities: What Makes a City a City?, to others focused on early career advice from experienced professionals. Every session and workshop was enlightening in different ways and left me excited to research more on the topics, and implement new technologies and tools. My most notable session was Spatial Modeling to Support Planning, where Ashley Hitt and Jason Kaper discussed the process of creating and utilizing an Active Transportation Network. I was fascinated to hear about how GIS can be used to assess the accessibility of an area in terms of bikeability and public transportation. I am eager to look into researching this topic further where I am located, especially as the road network continues to expand in the Metro Atlanta area.

The social events and activities at the conference were incomparable to any of my previous conferences, with ideal attendance sizes and settings to network and interact. Whether knocking down pins at the bowling alley, participating in the GeoCaching Poker Crawl, engaging in Lean sessions led by Tim Nolan, or sharing lunches at the North Market, these moments provided great opportunities to socialize with session partners and fellow attendees turned new friends.

For all of these reasons, I just want to reiterate how thankful I am to have received this opportunity to attend my first of what I hope to be many GIS-Pro conferences. I cannot express enough gratitude to the URISA community for their warm welcome. I know that being a part of URISA early in my career will prove extremely useful in maneuvering and understanding the field. I’ve gained essential connections, resources, and knowledge necessary to not only thrive but also advance in my GIS career.

**Christina Sabochick:** I am honored to have been awarded the Dr. Marilyn O’Hara Ruiz Young Professional Scholarship to attend GIS-Pro 2023 in Columbus, Ohio this October. The conference was a career-catalyzing opportunity that left me feeling excited about the future of the GIS profession and with an unimaginable number of connections and friends. I cannot express how meaningful the experience was for me, especially at a time when I was transitioning from the end of a yearlong fellowship at the Center for Geospatial Analysis at William & Mary to the start of a new role as a GIS Analyst at Niyam IT.

Thinking back on the week in O-H (I-O), each day was full of events and sessions that facilitated the career insights and connections I was able to take away. I was constantly hearing from fellow GIS practitioners about their work (whether at a topic-specific session, such as When Natural Disasters Strike, or at the fast-paced 2023 Lightning Talks), learning about leadership techniques and certification options (including the Women in Leadership and Want to Boost your GIS Career? sessions), and attending fun and engaging socials with other conference attendees. All of these educational and networking opportunities were outstanding and impressive.

One session stood out for me: Value Stream Mapping with Pravin Mathur, Tim Nolan, and Wendy Peloquin. This session had audience members on our feet using sticky notes to map out the steps in a process (my group chose carving a pumpkin, but the concept certainly can and should be applied to professional workflows as well). By mapping out a process from start to finish and ensuring that each step contributes to the value and flow of the end product, people involved at every stage can understand the “why” of their work and potential improvements can be more easily identified.

Another favorite event of mine was bowling at PINS Mechanical, where I discovered I am not good at the sport but do have a secret talent for ring toss. All along the way, URISA members were supportive and welcoming, and I was truly blown away by the caliber of the community.

Thank you again to URISA for this opportunity. I couldn’t have dreamed of a better way to kickstart my geospatial career. I look forward to attending future GIS-Pros and continuing my involvement in this wonderful organization for years to come!
Virtual URISA – Take advantage of the opportunities!

TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2024 AT 2:00 PM EASTERN/1:00 PM CENTRAL/12:00 PM MOUNTAIN/11:00 AM PACIFIC

URISA Climate and Community Resilience Webinar Series: FEMA’s Hazus and National Risk Index

The U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency has developed multiple geospatial tools and datasets that can be used by geospatial professionals, emergency management practitioners, and decision makers to visualize, analyze, and inform decisions related to natural hazard mitigation. Hazus offers powerful models that apply information about buildings, infrastructure, and population to assess the physical, economic, and social impacts of earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, and hurricanes. It can leverage out of the box information as well as more detailed user provided data to support analysis.

The presentation will offer an overview of the capabilities of Hazus as well as discuss plans to migrate this powerful technology to ArcGIS Pro and eventually an open-source web platform. It will also demonstrate the resources available in the National Risk Index (NRI), a dataset and online tool that illustrates risk for United States communities for 18 natural hazards. NRI provides a baseline risk assessment for every county and census tract that can be explored with minimal technical expertise.

Speakers:
- Casey Zuzak, Senior Risk Analyst, National Hazards Risk Assessment Program, Office of Resilience, United States Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Maureen Kelly, Risk Analyst, National Hazards Risk Assessment Program, Office of Resilience, United States Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Jesse Rozelle, Natural Hazards Risk Assessment Program, Office of Resilience, United States Federal Emergency Management Agency

Moderator: Kevin Mickey, GISP, Director, Professional Development and Geospatial Technologies Education at The Polis Center, Indianapolis, Indiana

REGISTER (FREE)

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7 AT 1:00 PM EASTERN/12:00 PM CENTRAL/11:00 AM MOUNTAIN/10:00 AM PACIFIC

URISA Climate and Community Resilience Webinar Series: FEMA’s Resilience Analysis and Planning Tool (RAPT)

Learn about the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Resilience Analysis and Planning Tool (RAPT). Benjamin Rance from FEMA’s Risk Analysis, Planning & Information Directorate will be presenting information about this powerful, GIS-driven, resource and how it supports emergency management. RAPT provides direct access to multiple static and streaming data layers that help communities analyze and understand their exposure to and risk from a variety of hazards. You will learn about recent and planned updates to the RAPT and how it complements other FEMA resources such as Hazus and the National Risk Index.

Speaker: Benjamin C. Rance, Management & Program Analyst, Risk Analysis, Planning & Information Directorate (RAPID), Resilience, FEMA

Moderator: Kevin Mickey, GISP, Director, Professional Development and Geospatial Technologies Education at The Polis Center, Indianapolis, Indiana

REGISTER (FREE)

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22 AT 2:00 PM EASTERN/1:00 PM CENTRAL/12:00 PM MOUNTAIN/11:00 AM PACIFIC

URISA Climate and Community Resilience Webinar Series: The Role of GIS in Determining the FEMA Community Disaster Resilience Zones

The Community Disaster Resilience Zones Act was signed into law in December of 2022. It requires FEMA to apply a natural hazard risk assessment index to identify census tracts most at risk from the impacts of natural hazards and climate change. FEMA has leveraged geospatial tools and methods to identify the most at risk and in need communities to create resilience zones. This webinar will explore how these zones were derived and how the geospatial community and other stakeholders contributed to this process. It will also offer guidance on how geospatial professionals can contribute to the future of these resources and how they can be leveraged by communities as they work to mitigate the impacts of natural hazards.

Speakers:
- Casey Zuzak, Senior Risk Analyst, National Hazards Risk Assessment Program, Office of Resilience, United States Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Jeanine Petterson, Senior Advisor, Office of Resilience Strategy, Office of Resilience, United States Federal Emergency Management Agency

Moderator: Kevin Mickey, GISP, Director, Professional Development and Geospatial Technologies Education at The Polis Center, Indianapolis, Indiana

REGISTER (FREE)
CASE STUDY: SaaS GIS Helps DuPage County Stay Ahead of Winter Weather

As the transportation agency for the second-most populous county in the state and with over 1,000 plowable lane miles, roughly the distance from Chicago to Denver, Colorado, the DuPage County Division of Transportation (DuDOT) is responsible for keeping its streets clear and as safe as possible to ensure the area runs smoothly during the winter months. Winter weather can be challenging for the Chicago metropolitan area, but DuPage County is well prepared to handle snow and ice, thanks to its GIS-enabled snowplow operations. This past snow season, it experienced 22 snow events.

Mike Figuray, manager of highway operations, looks forward to each snow season to start its snow operations and launch Esri’s ArcGIS Winter Weather Solution to plan the most efficient routes, use real-time tracking capability, and visualize all streams of operation data on an interactive map.

DuPage Pioneers Snow Operations Solutions

Before using GIS, one of the frustrations within the department was the cumbersome web interface used to track snowplows and extract data from the current automatic vehicle location (AVL) system. By the time staff could extract data, it lacked any real-time use, so they resorted to calling each driver when they cleared a road and updated that information on a spreadsheet.

Around the same time, GIS manager Tom Ricker and Figuray connected with Esri’s ArcGIS Solutions team, who was developing a new winter weather solution. Ricker and Figuray collaborated with Esri on what requirements, features, and tools were needed to build a robust winter weather solution that would work for them and other agencies across the country. After several meetings with Esri’s developers and initial modifications to what today is the Winter Weather Operation solution, DuPage and other test sites were among the first municipalities to test the solution in the 2022 winter season.

Winter Weather Operations in Full Effect

To get the real-time awareness that the county needed, Ricker configured the fleet AVL system to ingest the data into its Winter Operations Center dashboard using ArcGIS Velocity, which is a software as a service (SaaS) application that pulls data from smart devices and the Internet of Things (IoT) into ArcGIS.

Managers like Figuray can look to the Winter Operations Center dashboard to see exactly who’s where and what routes are coming up next.

“The moment we announce an active winter event, and the trucks hit the road, our team has complete insight into what is going on,” said Figuray. As a plow truck salts a road, the color of that road segment on the map changes to indicate to managers which roads have been serviced and how long before they may need to service that route again.

In addition to benefiting its management of the plow trucks, DuDOT has simplified the web map to only show where the plow drivers are and the plowing status of the roads with other departments and supervisors. “During larger snow events where the emergency management operations center is activated, this map helps them understand which roads have been serviced,” said Ricker.

The most significant benefit to this solution is the operational awareness of where trucks are and how much salt they are dropping at any given time. “Salt is expensive,” explained Figuray. “So, we can monitor the salt our drivers are putting down. If one route looks better, we can know when to call our drivers to adjust their salt spreader settings as needed.”

When drivers come in after the end of their day, they input the material used with ArcGIS Survey123, a mobile smart form app. The data collected there is then attributed to each respective vehicle and driver so that the information can help with budgeting efforts after the event and season. The dashboard houses all that information per snow event, so they can also see specific metrics on the material used, precipitation levels, and hours per shift and compare their operations side by side.

The dashboard also gives staff the ability to instantaneously analyze the data from each snow event.

Lastly, there’s little to no interaction with the technology that the drivers must learn. “That’s also an added benefit to the winter weather solution,” expressed Figuray. “It’s a behind-the-scenes
implementation that doesn’t distract our team and will continually enhance [its] performance.”

Although the Winter Weather Operations solution is a preconfigured set of maps and apps that work together to deploy an efficient snow operations workflow, DuPage staff can customize and add to the solution as needed. “Being that it is a SaaS solution, we have a lot of flexibility to make custom adjustments within the app,” expressed Ricker. “If there’s another aspect of the operations we want to track, we can do so. It’s just a matter of capturing that data and feeding it onto ArcGIS.”
Michael J. Kevany

URISA is pleased to announce the induction of Michael J. Kevany into its GIS Hall of Fame. URISA's GIS Hall of Fame honors persons and organizations that have made significant and original contributions to the development and application of GIS concepts, tools, or resources, or to the GIS profession.

Mike was one of a small number of professionals who helped lay the foundations for GIS beginning in the mid-1960s and continued to make significant contributions in the development and the use of GIS technology throughout his professional career of almost 50 years. He has been a leader of URISA since its very early years and served on its Board of Directors and contributed in many ways to URISA's work to support GIS education and networking. His many contributions to the development and effective use of GIS technology are too numerous to mention in entirety but some key highlights are mentioned below:

- Early work (1962 to 1967) in developing tools for mainframe computers for data analysis in regional planning for the LA County Regional Planning Commission establishing the value of automation of spatial data as a foundation of analysis and regional planning
- In 1967, he was a member of a team with Census Bureau employees in the New Haven CT “Census Use Study” which tested and refined the DIME (Dual Independent Map Encoding) file system to ready it for use in the 1970 Census creating a foundation for future advanced GIS technology use for demographic data
- In the early 1970s, he led a team for the HUD-sponsored Urban Information System Inter-Agency Committee (USAC) initiative prototyping “integrated municipal information systems” (IMIS)-considered an important conceptual foundation for later GIS implementations
- As a GIS consultant (from the late 1970s) for a wide range of government, utility, and other organizations. In the early years of GIS, Mike developed practices and tools for GIS planning and design that provided a foundation for successful GIS programs throughout North American and Europe.
- Mike was a principal author of the 1991 book, Geographic Information Systems: A Guide to the Technology and is the author of many other GIS publications that have contributed greatly to growth in understanding of practical GIS concepts and applications.
- Served as a mentor and co-consultant to a number of Individuals who have left their own mark on the GIS industry including Rich Gooden, Shawn Wampler, Neil McGaffey, Stu Davis, Cy Smith among many others in federal, state and local government organizations
- While leading a team from the PlanGraphics supporting GIS implementation and operation for the City of NY GIS Program he helped put in place GIS operations to support response and recovery from the 9/11/2001 World Trade Center attack.

URISA’s Hall of Fame laureates include:

- 2006 Inductee: Gary Hunter
- 2007 Inductees: Don Cooke and Michael Goodchild
- 2009 Inductees: Will Craig and Carl Reed
- 2010 Inductee: C. Dana Tomlin
- 2011 Inductees: William Huxhold and Barry Wellar
- 2012 Inductees: National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Natural Resources Canada, Statistics Canada, United States Census Bureau and United States Geological Survey
- 2014 Inductee: Charles Croner
- 2016 Inductees: Alex Miller, Mark Monmonier, and Waldo Tobler
- 2018 Inductees: Peter Burrough and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- 2020 Inductee: URISA's GISCorps
- 2022 Inductee: Nancy von Meyer

Mike was recently recognized for this honor during the URISA GIS-Pro 2023 annual conference in Columbus, Ohio.

URISA President, Ashley Hitt and URISA GIS Hall of Fame inductee, Mike Kevany. Visit URISA’s GIS Hall of Fame to learn about the path-breaking accomplishments of all inductees.
URISA Leaders Recognized at GIS-Pro 2023

During the Awards Luncheon at GIS-Pro 2023 in Columbus, Ohio last month, URISA recognized the 2023 URISA GIS Hall of Fame inductee, Mike Kevany, along with the 2023 Exemplary Systems in Government (ESIG) Award winners (be sure to take some time to review the videos submitted by the winning systems).

A number of URISA leaders were also recognized for their volunteer service during the conference. We congratulate and thank all honorees for their amazing contributions to the community!

Horwood Distinguished Service Award: An occasional award given for long-term service to URISA and the profession. This award is URISA’s ultimate award for service and leadership to URISA and within the geospatial industry. Awardees will have demonstrated significant contributions to both URISA and the geospatial technologies industry. The Horwood Distinguished Service Award is named after founding member and first URISA President, Edgar Horwood. Horwood was an early pioneer in the field of information systems for local government and admired by all for his intellectual and organizational contributions to URISA. Horwood was the Chair of the constitutional drafting committee, giving URISA the “open membership” model that has led to our inter-disciplinary organization.

Bruce Joffe Leadership Award: Presented to members who have demonstrated exemplary leadership to URISA, creativity, innovation, and dedicated support of URISA programs. The recipient should be a member of URISA for enough years to show a pattern of leadership. Typically, the recipient will have been responsible for new programs or activities, or significantly enhanced an existing activity or program, so that it takes URISA in a new direction and/or enhances our standing in the professional community.

2023 Recipients: Sid Pandey (Deloitte) and Wendy Peloquin (Avineon)

Service Award: Presented to members who have demonstrated faithful service to URISA and participation in its program over a period of several years. This award is for specific service to URISA. It should require a significant number of years of (not necessarily consecutive) service in a number of programs or committees, and a willingness to take on challenges without regard to the potential for recognition.

2023 Recipient: Alex Hepp (Cyclomedia)

Barbara Hirsch Special Service Award: Presented to members or staff who have made special contributions to URISA. This award was created (in 2004) to honor URISA’s former Chief Financial Officer, Barbara Hirsch. Barb made her mark at URISA by being an exceptional professional who would always step forward when a point needed to be made, but never stepped to the front for recognition. It is in the spirit of this dedication that the Board of Directors has created an award for special service to URISA. This award will be given to individuals or committees who have shown a similar consummate level of service to URISA through an ongoing commitment to our success as an organization.

2023 Recipients:
- Steve Steinberg (Los Angeles County)
- Rachel Marquez (Los Angeles County)
- Sara Taylor (Texas 811)

Chapter of the Year: Each year, URISA recognizes an outstanding Chapter that has sponsored particularly effective activities or has otherwise excelled in serving its membership. Outstanding Chapter Award criteria include:

- Innovation
- Outreach
- Education
- Community Impact

The URISA California Chapter was the recipient of this year’s Outstanding Chapter Award.

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Young Professional of the Year: URI-SA was also pleased to recognize Sara Thompson (Arizona Department of Transportation) as URI-SA’s 2023 Young Professional of the Year in recognition of outstanding contributions as part of URI-SA’s Vanguard Cabinet.

URISA President, Ashley Hitt, with Sara Thompson.

Dr. Marilyn O’Hara Ruiz Young Professional Scholarship Winners: Jordan Landrum and Christina Sabochick (learn more here)

Review the distinguished history of URI-SA Award winners: https://urisa.org/page/ServiceAwards

URISA President, Ashley Hitt, with Jordan Landrum and Christina Sabochick

Hall of Fame continued from page 3

URISA Board of Director Announcement
Following GIS-Pro 2023 in Columbus, one of URI-SA’s directors announced her resignation from the Board.

We all wish her good health and happiness!

Tom Fisher, President, noted “URISA would like to recognize Bernadette de Leon for her leadership and service to the association. She was elected to the Board last year and recently had to step away from the commitment prior to completing her three year term which expires October 2025. To fill the vacancy, we looked to the most recent board election. Sid Pandey was a candidate and would have been elected to the Board if we had one more spot to fill. We are pleased to announce that Sid has agreed to join the Board to complete Bernadette’s term.”

Sid Pandey is a senior consultant at Deloitte in its location intelligence practice. He has nearly 10 years of experience helping organizations leverage spatial data and geospatial technology to address various challenges including natural disaster response, and managing critical infrastructure and key resources. Sid was an active member of URI-SA’s Vanguard Cabinet, serving as chair in 2023, helping the cabinet create events, activities, and resources to support emerging geospatial professionals. He also actively supports multiple URI-SA Committees and the mentoring network. In 2018, he was recognized in xyHt magazine’s 40 Under 40 list of Remarkable Geospatial Professionals, and in 2021 Geospatial World named him one of its 50 Rising Stars in the geospatial industry. In 2022, he was also recognized in xyHt magazine’s list of 22 Young Geospatial Pros to Watch and was named as one of URI-SA’s Young Professionals of the Year for his service on the Vanguard Cabinet. During GIS-Pro 2023, Sid was honored with the URI-SA Leadership Award. Welcome to the Board, Sid!

Sid Pandey

Mark your Calendar for CalGIS 2024

Hosted by California URISA, CalGIS features education and training, and ample opportunities to build your professional network and find solutions.

There is no better venue to connect with the California Geospatial Community than CalGIS! Don’t miss preconference workshops and training, keynote speakers, breakout sessions, networking, and a Solutions Showcase in the exhibit hall.

Attendance at CalGIS earns substantial GISP® Education Points. Program details and registration will be available soon!
Hello, fellow URISA members. I am excited to begin this journey as your President for the upcoming year. Taking the gavel at GIS-Pro in my home state of Ohio was a profound experience, underscoring the significance and responsibility I bear to the URISA organization, its members, and my local GIS community in Ohio. My aim is to emulate the tremendous success of the Columbus conference and build upon the legacy of Past President Ashley Hitt in my role as Board President.

Reflecting on the conference, I find myself contemplating my URISA story—a journey that commenced as a GIS Analyst and Planner in Kansas City, Missouri. Early in my career, my desire to stay connected to the industries I was part of led me to join both URISA and the American Planning Association. In those formative days, my memberships were driven by a thirst for industry knowledge through publications, given the absence of today’s webinars. Proudly, I earned designations as a GIS Professional (GISP) and Certified Planner (AICP) during my tenure in Kansas City.

Fast forward to my return to Ohio, where I assumed the role of GIS Manager for a watershed conservancy district. Here, I recognized the interconnected nature of GIS and planning, akin to how watersheds transcend political boundaries. This realization propelled me to create a connected GIS community, bridging local, regional, state, federal, academic, and non-profit entities. Establishing a geospatial data partnership non-profit was a significant step toward sharing data and knowledge for the public’s health, safety, and welfare in Appalachia Ohio.

During this time, I discovered that URISA had chapters and that they were not fully integrated with the parent organization. While chapters existed, their independence struck me as a missed opportunity for a more cohesive network of local problem solvers using GIS. Over my fifteen years of experience, I developed a philosophy that what makes us different should be shared to make us stronger. Chapters, I believed, could be a vital link in bringing local GIS solutions to the national and international stage through organizational webinars and workshops.

Recognizing this need, I volunteered my time to address the Chapter chartering problem, aiming to unite existing chapters under the formal umbrella of URISA. The chartering process was not without challenges, but ultimately thirteen chapters saw the strength in unity. These chapters believed in building robust local GIS communities and contributing local knowledge to the national and international GIS community.

Now, as URISA Board President, I extend an invitation to all those working with GIS and geospatial technologies to embark on their URISA journey. Join us in connecting with fellow practitioners, discovering the nuances that make us both different and the same, and finding your passion within URISA. I’ve found that the more you give back to the profession, the more you gain in understanding your work. If you are eager to jump in and connect with the community, please join me in my call to action to create a vision and strategy for creating and growing URISA Chapters. Reach out to me directly at tfisher@urisa.org to seize this opportunity of a lifetime.

URISA transformed my use of GIS technology from just another job into a fulfilling career. I invite you to join me and hundreds of other dedicated individuals who contribute to the profession by volunteering with URISA. Explore your passion, turn your job into a thriving career, and become an integral part of our vibrant community.

Let’s shape the future of GIS together.
Welcome New URISA Members

Pankaj Bajracharya
Rafael Balneg
Pamela Berry
Leah Bowyer
Allison Bruegger
Haynes Bunn
Mike Chavez
Isabela Contreras
Nicole D’Antonio
Hulda Desrosiers
Kevin V. DiCrispino
Scott Fierro
Christy Flickinger
Shannon Foxx Day
John Haddad
Payton Hall
Elisabeth Hiers
Xylon Holmes
Kimberly Jackson
Asim Jan
J Kirkpatrick
T. Dan Lambert
Charles William Lovelace
Jameal Magno
Kathleen Martin
Liam Mazur
Natalie Nasatka
Deanthony Neal
Marquis De Lafayette Pickett
Marc Rabideau
Kevin Rubalcaba
Gabriella Sabwa
Andrew Scampone
Kelsey Shope
Gene Su
Joseph Tayabji
Elizabeth Taylor
Loris A. Thomas
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Kristen Vincent
Lauren Wade
London Walker
Tina Westfall
Julie A Willett
Lucia Woo
Amanda Wright
Jessica Wyatt
Joseph Young

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City of Coppell, Texas
City of St. Charles, Missouri
Village of Oswego, Illinois

New Bronze Corporate Partner

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AirWorks empowers project managers to deliver more projects, faster. Our geospatial intelligence solution quickly produces linework you can trust. By putting reliable data in your hands, we give you the tools to make the best decisions, reduce risks, and be more efficient. You can depend on our accuracy and quality to keep your team and clients happy, making it easier to grow your business as the market leader. Win more bids with AirWorks.
Wishing you a Happy Holiday and a joyful New Year.

Best wishes from your friends at URISA
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US Geological Survey – Reston, Virginia
US Census Bureau

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Indian Nations Council of Governments (INCOG) – Tulsa, Oklahoma
Seneca Nation of Indians – Salamanca, New York

State/Provincial
Arizona Department of Transportation
Arkansas GIS Office – Little Rock, Arkansas
Missouri Dept of Conservation – Columbia, Missouri
Ohio Geographically Referenced Information Program, Columbus, Ohio
Texas General Land Office – Austin, Texas
Virginia Department of Transportation – Richmond, Virginia
West Virginia Tax Division

Regional
Atlanta Regional Commission – Atlanta, Georgia
Bowie Central Appraisal District – Texarkana, Texas
Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency – Chattanooga, Tennessee
Dallas Central Appraisal District – Dallas, Texas
Metro – Portland, Oregon
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District – Los Altos, California
Moulton Niguel Water District – Laguna Niguel, California
Nashua Regional Planning Commission – Nashua, New Hampshire
Texarkana Water Utilities – Texarkana, Texas

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Newton County – Covington, Georgia
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URISA Government Agency Member Directory

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Matanuska-Susitna Borough – Palmer, Alaska
Spotsylvania GIS, Virginia
Town of Apex – Apex, North Carolina
Town of Flower Mound – Flower Mound, Texas
Town of Prosper – Prosper, Texas
Village of Oswego, Illinois
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Mark Your Calendar!

February 27-29, 2024
URISA LEAP Conference
Virtual

March 18-20, 2024
CalGIS 2024 Conference
Visalia, California

April 8-11, 2024
2024 GIS/Valuation Technologies Conference
Charlotte, North Carolina

June 3-7, 2024
URISA GIS Leadership Academy
Seattle, Washington

August 12-16, 2024
URISA ADVANCED GIS Leadership Academy
Chicago, Illinois

October 7-10, 2024
GIS-Pro 2024
Portland, Maine

November 18-22, 2024
URISA GIS Leadership Academy
Fort Worth, Texas

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