

## United Nations General Assembly Adopts First Geospatial Resolution

The science that supports the precise pinpointing of people and places should be shared more widely, according to the United Nations General Assembly. The statement came as it adopted its first resolution recognising the importance of a globally coordinated approach to geodesy – the discipline focused on accurately measuring the shape, rotation and gravitational field of planet Earth.

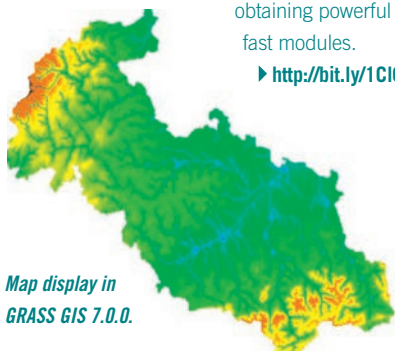
► <http://bit.ly/1CI5B8o>

### New Stable Release of GRASS GIS 7.0.0

After many years of development, the new stable major release of GRASS GIS 7.0.0 is now available. The graphical user interface based on wxPython has been enriched with many new features in order to make complex GIS operations available as simply as possible. The old Tcl/Tk-based GUI has been dropped, and the developers have added important new functionality to the core system, including the new Python interface to the C library. This new API permits users to create new GRASS GIS-Python modules in a simple way yet while

obtaining powerful and fast modules.

► <http://bit.ly/1CI65eL>



Map display in GRASS GIS 7.0.0.

## Airbus D&S Delivers Urban Mapping Solution to Rolta

Airbus Defence and Space has installed its Street Factory 3D urban mapping solution at Rolta's facility in Mumbai, India. This completes its processing capacities, based on two Pixel Factory processing suites already in use. With the acquisition of the Street Factory system, Rolta has become the second company after PASCO Corporation, headquartered in Japan, to own the complete range of geoprocessing solutions offered by Airbus Defence and Space.

► <http://bit.ly/1CI5EBj>

## Celebration of Maps



Over the past decade or so geomatics has rapidly evolved and spread into almost every industry, to the point where most people do not even realise they are using some aspect of geomatics. With an increased use of GIS and GPS technology, combined with a generation driven by digital communication, we have started to notice a decline of traditional paper maps and more emphasis on digital mapping applications.

This year has been designated as International Map Year – a celebration of maps, geographic information, and how they are used in society – so it seems fitting to write a little about maps and why there will always be a place for traditional cartography in geomatics.

The basic purpose of traditional maps is to help describe spatial relationships of specific features. Different types of maps are used for numerous and diverse purposes, but they all share common characteristics such as orientation, scale and symbology. Throughout history, maps of all types have been providing people with ways to make life easier.

In a society driven by digital communication, the power of location has become an everyday occurrence, especially since most people these days own a mobile device with some sort of digital mapping application installed. Generally speaking we all want to know where things are located and the best and most efficient way to reach them. Digital mapping applications provide us with all that, but without the need to unfold a large and detailed sheet of paper, orientate ourselves and then determine that same outcome on

our own. With digital applications making things easier, should we be concerned that traditional paper maps may be in danger of disappearing?

I think it is pretty safe to say that GIS has almost fully replaced hand-drawn cartography and that most people can use geographic software or mapping applications to create a map (even my kids have used ArcGIS to create maps for their elementary-school projects). However, not many people can actually draft an accurate spatial representation by hand as cartographers have been doing for many years.

Convenience is one thing but that often comes at the cost of losing the artistic component which is often involved with good cartography. Unroll an old hand-drawn map and suddenly people are no longer concerned about how much more efficient digital maps are; instead, they are appreciating the details used to create the spatially accurate and visually appealing representation. Hence, there are clearly still many of us who can appreciate the value of the traditional paper map.

When you consider the way and rate that geomatics technology is advancing, with drones, 3D printing and terabyte-sized data storage all becoming increasingly common, I think it is fair to say that traditional paper maps will probably never actually disappear altogether but instead they will just become one of many different ways of helping to make life easier.

Therefore, if we focus more on teaching youngsters about geomatics theory, geography and traditional cartography, then we may find that more people will learn to appreciate the value offered by paper maps while at the same time taking advantage of all the other types of maps that continue to evolve from digital mapping applications.

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