

VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Ted MacKinnon

GISP - Geomatics Specialist, Natural Resources

Ted MacKinnon is the Vice-President of the Canadian Cartographic Association and a Geomatics Specialist with the Department of Natural Resources.



"Everything is Related to Everything Else, but Near Things are More Related than Distant Things." Waldo Tobler

I am sure that we can all agree that the evolution of the Internet and advances in mobile technology now play a major role in map creation, and the way most people think about maps. Location has become a powerful tool allowing maps to play an influential role in our lives. Location data is becoming fundamental, especially considering that more than 90% of smartphone users utilize apps daily that use location based services.

A few months ago at the Consumer Electronic Show (CES) in Las Vegas, I had the opportunity to see first hand how companies are using geospatial data coupled with new concepts and technology to help move society towards an autonomous world. I witnessed new concepts like machine learning, connected vehicle services, geovisualization functionalities, and self-healing maps. Some pretty cool technology all thanks to the power of location and geospatial data.

These are exciting times, yet many fear as online mapping continues to grow that we will lose the detail that every good cartographer appreciates (and perhaps traditional paper maps will soon become collector items). As more and more benefit from new technologies that utilize the power of location, we must realize that this is not the first time, where changes in technology have helped broaden the reach of cartography.

During the 16th century, cartography was on the rise due to an increase in printing and the development of new surveying techniques. There was also the need to produce better maps, driven by increased commercial expansion, the colonization of new parts of the world, and increases in military. The improved mapping capabilities in GIS and remote sensing software have improved

drastically over the past few decades, these days almost all geospatial professionals produce maps, yet very few of them consider themselves Cartographers.

Michael Goodchild helped put some of this into perspective recently at the CCA Conference, as he used the concepts of 'Place and Space' to help illustrate the different ways that cartography stills plays vital roles within our new electronic world. Regardless of the technology, the data or the methodology, there will still be a need for good cartographic design.

Technology advances quickly making it hard to predict what will be the next big developments in cartography, and it will continue to evolve with location still being one of the driving forces. When the CCA started in 1975, no one probably envisioned that someday people would be so dependent on maps, and how mapping technology would make everyday tasks more efficient. Cartography has played an important role in Canada, and it is up to us to make sure that the CCA continues to be relevant as the future of cartography evolves.

The activity and quality of presentations experienced while at the CCA conference seem to indicate that cartography is still strong in Canada, and that people still share a passion for the art of map making.

Thanks to the members of the CCA for the encouragement to join the Executive Committee, I was somewhat humbled when I was first approached, and almost declined since I was currently finishing a double term as the President of the Geomatics Association of Nova Scotia. However, I am glad to be part of an organization that shares such a passion for geography and all things spatial, and has become the voice of cartography in Canada. The CCA is a strong organization thanks to its members from coast to coast that continues to help it maintain its goals, year after year.