

It is time to head for end user satisfaction by implementing location as service component



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There are no doubts that INSPIRE, as legal and technical initiative carried out by the European Commission fully politically supported by the European Union, has interested and is still fascinating the international community of geo information. From South America to Far East, as I personally had the opportunity to verify in technical and professional missions, the interoperability dogma is widely accepted and the praxis of concentrating on metadata and web services as well.

INSPIRE 2014 Conference demonstrated that individuals, organisations and also nations, referring to thousands of pages of regulation, specification and guidance documents, could relate to their own benefits. It has also to be recognised that presently the shared datasets are still very basic while the organizations' behaviour of not sharing data is still often to be seen in many countries. European nations differ among themselves on final

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user satisfaction while the involvement of the local public authorities in realising the National SDIs deeply varies within the Union nations. The paradigm of data flow from central to local and vice-versa is conjugated differently depending on the administration organizational and functioning model. INSPIRE application, use and achievements, besides the reporting to the Commission, are to avoid any infringement procedure which may be applied to the nation not meeting the requirements of the directive. The success of interoperability and of SDI depends on the cultural environment where it is going to be applied. It has to be considered that INSPIRE is not only a technical directive but it is having some substantial ideological, political and economic fundamental components. Interoperability is the tool while the principles are the foundations.

INSPIRE addresses national data sets and deals with themes specifically oriented to environment and the representation scale is located in the middle and small cartographic range. On the other hand, presently, the most used geographic information for satisfying end user needs is the micro geographic information. The answer of basic question "where" has the solution, for common users and citizens, in the large scale range about from 1:2000 to 1: 500, the typical walking distance. The semantic and visual aspect of the answer to "where" has also the most relevant value because the common end user is not interested in digits representing coordinates but in recognising the "place" described in an easy to understand model. To this regard INSPIRE sets the foundations but the already defined data specifications have to be developed to match the needs of semantic management of data sets and spatial knowledge.

It is matter of the fact that, for the time being, public central administrations, specially in Europe, delegate their functions more and more to local authorities. Data sets are originated locally

for detailed purposes and at sufficiently large scale, they flow through the national SDI only if they are compliant to data specifications and services' standard. The interoperability from local to central has to be in place for insuring the SDI running. Since data are originated locally and are shared accordingly to sub-national administration's rule, it can be said that SDIs are very much dependent on local culture and local originated data.

Public administrations' functioning modes, places fruition and use, toponyms and their languages or dialects are components of the culture. It is my opinion that in order to guarantee a strict adherence between GI and final users - citizens satisfaction, it is necessary to move from the position paradigm (the cartographic coordinates) to the location paradigm which solves the "where" issue and gives the location knowledge to the end user. SDIs are data and services oriented but it is time now to head for end user satisfaction by implementing location as service component. This is the challenge to be faced by public administrations implementing GI in public services provided to citizens.

The present situation is having a positive trend to develop in this sense offering to SDIs the way to fulfil the mandate of making data and services interoperable for user needs satisfaction. The so called Location Framework has been already pursued by some member states in Europe and it may be considered as the unifying system for providing GI integrated services to citizens.

Just considering the ancient maps not using exact cartographic and projection systems, they were not giving positioning data to users but location useful information for travellers, sailors and explorers. They were used for centuries in multi-cultural and multi-language environment: which are beautiful examples of interoperability, of distributed services and of standards. Are we aiming to that? ▽