

○ EDITORIAL

Applied GIS – another peer-reviewed applied (social and environmental) science research journal to keep up with? Well, yes. However, *Applied GIS* meets a number of urgent needs in an admittedly crowded science-journal market.

A changing world order and the advent of the digital-information revolution means that now, more than ever, the survival of the world of ideas depends on demonstrating utility (discipline by discipline) in the marketplace. Accordingly, to supplement traditional debate and formats, *Applied GIS* will publish large-scale, detailed exemplifications of the usefulness of spatial data handling aspects of social and environmental sciences across a range of disciplines (from archaeology to zoogeography and habitat modelling). With an emphasis on decision support for bringing sustainability policies into practice, applications in land use planning – and testing of theory in practice – will feature significantly in *Applied GIS*.

Like the inspirational online journal *GIDA* (<http://www.geodec.org/>), now no longer being published, *Applied GIS* is about GIS and decision support. The quality of decision making is crucial to the fate of individuals, corporations, and nation states. Decision making is, in turn, dependent upon decision support, a science that is becoming both increasingly complex and increasingly crucial in the information age. Exemplification of digital spatial data handling in decision support is proving to be a distinct component of scholarly communication, and part of its importance lies in demonstrating the potential for data integration.

Papers in *Applied GIS* will contain coloured maps that are expensive to publish in paper form. Traditionally they are ‘dumbed down’ to meet cost and format constraints, even in online journals. *Applied GIS* can publish hitherto cost-prohibitive spatial data modelling results, without the need to remove arguments in the papers that depend on detailed exemplification in display. *Applied GIS* will thus be a valuable publication option for research results not suitable for conventional publishing. This is closely related to the display innovations afforded by Monash University ePress’s online publication platform. As well as the now-standard functionalities expected of online journals (linked references, colour images, table-of-contents alerts and other reader features), *Applied GIS* will also offer zoom-in functionality for display of detail in maps and images. This is driven by MrSID, a compression format and plug-in viewer widely known and used among GIS practitioners and academics. This is especially important where these maps and images relate to whole jurisdictions or catchments.

Online journals not published by larger commercial concerns are often plagued by the problem of impermanency, with authors reluctant to submit to journals with no assurances that the journal or its contents will persist as publications of record. All Monash University ePress publications, including *Applied GIS*, will be archived by the National Library of Australia’s ‘Pandora’ service (<http://www.nla.gov.au/pandora>). The purpose of the Pandora archive is to collect and provide long-term access to selected Australian online publications and web sites. Thus researchers need no longer be constrained by a problem that has tended to keep them away from some e-journals.

GIDA, edited by Professor Jacek Malczewski, has inspired the development of *Applied GIS*. My co-editor Professor Ray Wyatt and I are pleased to announce that Professor Malczewski will play a role in assembling the second issue and, we hope, will also play further leading roles later

on. While *Applied GIS* will not be open access, as was *GIDA*, Monash University ePress, being a non-profit organisation devoted to scholarly communication, will be seeking to minimise the cost of access and is committed to further development of the journal and its functionality.

I thank the ePress Advisory Committee and ePress staff for their initiative and guidance in launching this, the first issue of *Applied GIS*. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Editorial Board members and authors who have supported, and submitted their papers to, the first issue. Editorial Board members extend an invitation to authors with data-intensive results that demand colour and zoom functionality, covering all aspects of spatial sciences, to submit their papers to *Applied GIS*. We trust that authors will take advantage of this opportunity, which allows scholars to communicate not only with one another, but also with spatial data users outside the research labs. This latter is surely very important in maintaining the balance between all stakeholders in our rapidly integrating and growing industry.

Jim Peterson, Editor, March 2005

Cite this article as: Peterson, Jim. 'Editorial'. *Applied GIS*, 1, DOI: 10.2104/ag050001