

GIS Ethics Panel Preparation

Panel Session:

3236 Geographic Information Ethics and GIScience II

is scheduled on Tuesday, 3/24/09, from 10:10 AM - 11:50 AM in Skybox 208, Riviera Hotel, 2nd Floor

Sponsorship(s):

Geographic Information Science and Systems Specialty Group
Ethics, Justice, and Human Rights Specialty Group

Organizer(s):

[Dawn J. Wright](#) - Oregon State University
[Francis Harvey](#) - University of Minnesota - Minneapolis

Chair(s):

[Francis Harvey](#) - University of Minnesota - Minneapolis

Panelist(s):

[Francis Harvey](#) - University of Minnesota - Minneapolis
[Dawn J. Wright](#) - Oregon State University
[Barbara Poore](#) - United States Geological Survey
[Rina Ghose](#) - University Of Wisconsin Milwaukee
[Kirk Goldsberry](#)
[Jeremy Crampton](#) - Georgia State University
[Geney Terry](#) - GISCI

Session Description: Ethical engagements with the multitude of GIS applications and uses, whether surreptitious or overt have marked recent developments in the field. Indeed, the variety of applications of GIS&T has led the U.S. Department of Labor to highlight "geographic technology" as a key high growth job field for the 21st century. While the potential benefits and risks of geographic technologies are becoming well known, these ethical issues are less widely engaged. For instance:

- Geographic technologies are surveillance technologies. The data they produce may be used to invade the privacy, and even the autonomy, of individuals and groups.
- Data gathered using geographic technologies are used to make policy decisions. Erroneous, inadequately documented, or inappropriate data can have grave consequences for individuals and the environment.
- Geographic technologies have the potential to exacerbate inequities in society, insofar as large organizations enjoy greater access to technology, data, and technological expertise than smaller organizations and individuals.

Questions and Thoughts for Panelists

Taking the growing "professionalization" of GIS as the starting point, we would like you to engage issues connected to the recent and current developments of GIS as a profession.

That does not by any means preclude historicism, but we would like panel comments to discuss issues that offer insightful, practical reasoning about the challenges and dilemmas for a GIS profession. The majority of you are educators and researchers. For this reason we would like you to also consider educational and training challenges. For instance here are some possible questions to consider:

- How do we integrate and improve ethical issues education in undergraduate and graduate programs and courses?
- Should degree programs be broadened to take up ethical issues in required core offerings or in professional development courses?

Surveillance, social justice, differential data access, privacy are also key words that you may consider in thinking about your contribution.

Remember there is a session with presentations right before the panel. If possible, please come to this session in order to find out what presenters say, and hear questions from the audience that you may wish to take up in your panel remarks.

Given the breadth of ethical issues that are surfacing in geography, we would also like to ask you to focus on issues connected to “professional” uses of GIS, whereby “professional” refers here to the practices of GIS use versus the theories of how GIS is used. Of course, the pedagogical perspective on these issues opens broader engagements, but we would like discussions to come back to professional issues. Indeed, one area for consideration is how educators and researchers should take up and be involved in professional activities, e.g., GISCI, URISA, and local, regional, and state GIS user groups.

We shall organize the panel in the usual format giving each panelist 10 minutes, with the remaining time for comments. At the end of the previous session we shall ask the audience if they have any questions they would like panelists to engage with.

Thanks again for agreeing to participate in the panel. If you can, let us know if you have any preference for your position in the panel. We hope and believe that 2009 is a key point in time for these discussions. If you have any questions please contact Dawn and Francis.