



Information Resources Exchange Group Highlights

Wednesday, March 14, 2018

The 106th meeting of the Information Resources Exchange Group (IREG) was called to order at the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's office by IREG Chair, Phil Pierdomenico, from the Philadelphia Water Department. Forty-Eight people were in attendance.

Key Points

- With the recent rise in data journalism, the role of data visualization has been questioned in the world of storytelling. By combining principles laid out by Edward Tufte and Alberto Cairo, Ben Garvey explains how to effectively get your point across without manipulating the emotions.
- Lee Hachadoorian has teamed up with CCFP to explore Pennsylvania's gerrymandering problem in anticipation of the 2018 midterm elections. By hitting the books and applying concepts laid out in legislature into the world of GIS, Lee attempts to provide a solution.
- Andrew Thompson returned to IREG to talk about some recent developments that have led to CARTO and MapBox teaming up and providing a web-based GIS stack that challenges the legacy desktop solutions of old, an incredible open-source success story.
- DVRPC recently released a new version of the Indicators of Potential Disadvantage (v 2.0) web-based tool and Shoshana Akins provided a quick rundown on the new datasets and methodology. The team took a different approach to deciding which census questions to look at to help identify potentially disadvantaged populations and reclassified the results that show a more accurate distribution across their nine-county region.

Presentations

Dataviz & Storytelling | Ben Garvey, Engineering Manager—Magento Business Intelligence
(ben@bengarvey.com)

Born into a family business with a lot of moving parts, the need to quickly understand how things are performing was drilled in Ben at a young age. He took that love for visualizing data with him to aid in Brett Mandel's 2013 for Philadelphia City Controller as Brett built his argument for why the city's budget needed someone to reign it in. Ben has put Edward Tufte's design principles into practice with Alberto Cairo's idea of graphicacy, contributing his own flair that he's picked up throughout his career, to fight the stigma that data visualization is so effective by manipulating the user's emotions. By using new javascript tools, such as Observable and Semiotic, Ben has created reproducible analyses that find patterns in today's world of big data.

Gerrymandering | Lee Hachadoorian, Temple University (lee.hachadoorian@temple.edu)

Lee has teamed up with Concerned Citizens for Democracy (CCFD) in the fight against politically-biased gerrymandering in Pennsylvania—a state that has been in the news recently as courts decide the legality of its current district map. Lee and his team have used spatial analysis to look at how the compactness score of districts have deteriorated over time as internal political boundaries, such as county and municipal lines, have been increasingly ignored. As the discussion of redistricting heats up prior to the 2018 midterm election, this team of activists have dug into the archives to find legal precedence to backup a proposed guideline to help remove partisanship from district creation. The next step for the team explore what kind of impact their redistricting model would have on election outcomes.

CARTO and MapBox Team Up | Andrew Thompson, Solutions Engineer, CARTO (athompson@carto.com)

MapZen recently shut its doors and left CARTO needing to find a way to get an essential service for any GIS software company—locational data collection. After going to the drawing board, CARTO found a worthy partner in MapBox to create an open-source, web-based GIS stack that can rival any system of old. Andrew discussed how MapBox's basemap and geocoder services have been seamlessly integrated to create a powerful platform with a bright future ahead of it.

DVRPC IPD v2.0 Update | Shoshana Akins, Public Participation Planner, DVRPC (sakins@dvrpc.org)

Shoshana and a group of other planning staff took to the drawing board to rethink the way DVRPC produces their Environmental Justice and Title VI analysis for the Indicators of Potential Disadvantage (IPD). By looking at youth, older adult, female, racial minority, ethnic minority, foreign-born, limited english proficiency, disabled, and low-income populations, the analysis was able to grab a more accurate representation of populations that may currently be potentially discriminated against. The team also reworked the classification procedure to account for distance away from the mean of the dataset.

Information Items

- DVRPC is helping coordinate efforts to prepare for the upcoming 2020 Census. Look for more information this spring about what localities can do to ensure that they're ready.
- DVRPC is hosting a MapTime/GeoPhilly event in DVRPC's Main Conference Room on Wednesday March 28th to talk about their Regional Sidewalk Inventory project.
- MAC URISA 2018 Conference is taking place in Atlantic City from October 24-26

The next scheduled IREG meeting is Wednesday, June 13th, 2018.

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