Content of the discussion forum of the
Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers of UNGEGN

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1. Discussion forum

Within the 10th UNGSDN (conference and side events) three new tasks/issues have been proposed to be added to the "Scope of work" and to the "Work plan" of the WG TDFG respectively:

Forum 1 - volunteered geographic information (VGI)/crowd-sourcing
Forum 2 - definitions for gazetteers and data types
Forum 3 - general feature types/categories

This discussion forum shall be utilized to commence investigations on these three issues mentioned before within the WG TDFG.

Registered members will be able to start to comment on the initial documents and extend the content of the Wiki "rooms" / pages respectively.

It is obvious that tackling these new and quite complex issues needs a strong support and contributions by the WG members. Volunteers from the WG are most welcome to provide content and initial documents, besides the C.P.s submitted within the 10th UNGSDN. If WG members or other UNGEGN experts are interested in contributing to these issues, please contact the convener of the WG.

Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu
Convener of the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers of UNGEGN
email: pier-giorgio.zaccheddu@bkg.bund.de

No labels

4 Child Pages

- Forum 1 - Volunteered geographic information and crowd-sourcing
- Forum 2 - definitions for gazetteers and data types
- Forum 3 - General feature types and categories
- Getting started
1.1. Forum 1 - Volunteered geographic information and crowd-sourcing

As our methods of accessing geographical information change and public interaction with such data becomes more dynamic, national mapping agencies and place-name organisations are looking to take advantage of the willingness of the local population to provide information on location and associated attributes (= Volunteered Geographic Information). The principal identifier of a location is its name and it is with this particular attribute that experts of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNEGCN) are concerned.

Experts from several countries have related their experiences in collecting and utilizing crowd-sourced geographical names data (see supporting documentation posted on this forum) and it is clear that there is no single established approach. For example in Sweden, the National Land Survey of Sweden – Lantmäteriet - has turned to crowd-sourcing as a new method of toponymic field collection. Using a specifically-designed mobile phone application, the public was asked to return names data over the city of Gävle which had been chosen as a pilot area. Some interesting initial findings were revealed in a paper “New method of field collection of Place-Names” [see attachment ‘Torensjö_Background+Information+on+crowd-sourcing’]. In Great Britain, Ordnance Survey has been experimenting with several different means of making use of crowd-sourced names information. Collaboration with the English Project’s Location Lingo scheme involved the use of a website to encourage public provision of unofficial or colloquial names; a separate initiative has been developed with the UK coastguard focussing on the collection of locally-used coastal names; and a further project using web-harvesting to extract information from websites through text analysis has also been investigated. Work is ongoing.

In order to assess the effectiveness and value of collecting names using volunteered geographic information, it would be useful to learn of experiences in other countries involved in such methods of geographical names collection.

The following sub-sites have been created within this forum in order to be able to monitor and streamline the discussions properly:

- **F1.1 General discussion**
- **F1.2 Reliability**

The discussions will be monitored and streamlined by two co-moderators.

**Moderation of Forum 1:**

Ms Annette Torensjö (Sweden)

Initial papers do help to commence investigations within the WG TDFG. Some of them are uploaded to this side and can be commented.

File

- [208086_GGIM_Future Trends Background Document.pdf](208086_GGIM_Future Trends Background Document.pdf)
  Background Document Prepared by Ordnance Survey, Great Britain on behalf of UN-GGIM

Modified: Nov 22, 2012 by Pier-Giorgio Zacccheddu
1.1.1. F1.1 General discussion

Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers /.../ Forum 1 - Volunteered geographic information and crowd-sourcing

F1.1 General discussion
Created by Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu, last modified on Aug 08, 2014

Within this forum it shall be discussed how effective and valuable the collection of names data using volunteered geographic information currently is.

The following questions are to be discussed:

F1.1-Q1: How are the crowd-sourced data being collected and processed in your institution/organization?
F1.1-Q2: How willing is the public to be involved in such a project and how is data provision encouraged?
F1.1-Q3: How can we as national place-names authorities “control” the information we get through this new method of field collection and how can we use it in our official maps?

3 Child Pages
   - F1.1-Q1: How are the crowd-sourced data being collected and processed in your institution/organization?
   - F1.1-Q2: How willing is the public to be involved in such a project and how is data provision encouraged?
   - F1.1-Q3: How can we as national place-names authorities “control” the information we get through this new method of field collection and how can we use it in our official maps?
F1.1-Q1: How are the crowd-sourced data being collected and processed in your institution/organization?

BKG Germany is currently starting actions to develop and evaluate methods on how to deal with VGI and crowd-sourced information. It has become obvious that the private sector and the VGI community will continue to have a significant role to play in providing the technologies and information required to maximise the opportunities available. I share GGIM’s vision that VGI and crowd-sourcing “[...] are likely to provide valuable and in many cases unique elements of geospatial information and the technologies and services required to maximise it, in addition to offering a growing understanding of the end-user base for geospatial information.”

8 Comments

Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu
F1.1-Q1: As the convenor of the WG TDFG I am planning to arrange a WG TDFG meeting in 2013 on the occasion of the ICC in Dresden. Within a WG TDFG meeting we might focus on any mid-term findings and outcomes related to specific topics. One of these topics could be “VGI and crowd-sourcing”. The methods on how crowd-sourced data is being collected and processed in institutions/organizations could be an interesting agenda item?
* O Eman Oreby likes this  * Nov 22, 2012

Annette Torensjo
In Sweden Lantmäteriet is the national place-name authority and as such we have started a work to develop and improve methods of collecting place-names. We have tested a method of crowd-sourcing with help of a cell phone app and the result was gratifying - but there are still work to be done to evaluate the method. We are currently discussing how to incorporate crowd-sourced place-names in our national place-names register and at the same time guarantee quality and good place-name practice. This forum shall encourage everyone to take part in this discussion and I have hopes that it will be alert.
* Dec 18, 2012

Caroline Burgess
A recent project to collect unofficial or colloquial names used by the general public in the UK was led by the English Project with Ordnance Survey involvement. The project involved the launch of a web site to collect vernacular names for a period of two weeks with active promotion, followed by a period of several months to continue collecting names. The experiment was promoted by the Daily Telegraph, a national newspaper, including on their web site, and also through interviews with about 20 local radio stations, and indirectly through local papers when they picked up on the story. OS has also been looking at web-harvesting names data, and also developing initiatives with professional and expert or amateur groups where either shared mutual interests or reciprocal benefits are perceived to exist. At the present time this involves a joint project with the UK coastguard focussing on the collection of locally-used coastal names.
* Feb 20, 2013
Douglas R. Caldwell
The US Geological Survey’s National Map Corps has been investigating crowdsourcing.

National Map Corps Home Page
https://my.usgs.gov/confluence/display/nationalmapcorps/Home

Volunteer Map Data Collection at the USGS

They have been prototyping facilities data collection (with names) in Colorado.

OpenStreetMap Collaborative Prototype, Phase One

Structures data collection for The National Map using volunteered geographic information
http://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/of20121299


Would be very interested in details from others work ... formal publications or informal publications would be very valuable.

* Mar 21, 2013

Annette Torensjö
Thank you for your input to the discussion. I am sorry to say that there is not much written concerning this topic from a Place-Names authority's point of view. Lantmäteriet is for the moment working on a handbook with instructions for municipalities and how they should register unofficial Place-Names in our geographical database. We are at this time taking care of the crowd-sourced Place-Names in our regular work with decision making. We are also discussing how we are going to use the benefits of crowd-sourcing in a suitable way and for the moment our idea is to do it with help of our webservice “Mapssearch and Place-Names” http://kios.lantmateriet.se/kios/index.html

* Mar 22, 2013

Teemu Leskinen
Because the role of the NLS Finland is to maintain and publish only authoritative (names) data, the standardisation process would be the issue. This concerns both the collecting process and, especially, further processing and verification of the crowd-sourced data. We do have public www-channels for giving feedback on any information on our topographic maps, including place names, but for the present the NLS has been reserved concerning actual and active place names VGI projects. So we are very interested to learn about plans and experiences of other similar organisations on how to deal with normalising the collecting processes and standardising the crow-sourced data itself.
At the moment the NLS Geographic Names Register (GNR) includes some 800,000 Finnish, Swedish and Saami names. In addition, the Names Archive (manual archive) of the Institute for the Languages of Finland comprises close to three million relevant records of standardised traditional place names, based on field collections (controlled crowd-sourcing) in different times during the 1900s and 2000s. There have been plans to start supplementing the GNR data contents by using the Institute’s collections. Because resources for re-checking the current use of the names are very limited, a web-based tool and VGI process for this purpose might be an option. There have also been thoughts on some restricted place names VGI projects, with an aim to result in a reasonable amount of relevant data, something like collecting names of springs.

- May 27, 2013

**Nivo Ratovoarison**

Madagascar is a large country where some migrating people attracted by new sites of mining resources or for some other reasons tend to create isolated villages without any infrastructure or communication at all. These villages are not yet figuring on the maps.

The national mapping institute, FTN, can’t by itself make the update so a project of collaboration with the army was started some months ago, based on the fact that groups of militaries are spread everywhere in the country to those places frequently subject of brigand attacks to maintain peace. They therefore could collect data (place name, location and number of population, ...), after a formation by the FTN.

Unfortunately, the project is still in steady after some discussion however, we (the FTN) are convinced that it is the best opportunity to fill the blank on the maps.

So, I will continue to participate in the other questions with the hypothesis that the project will be carried out.

- May 30, 2013

**Naima Friha**

In Tunisia, the Centre National de Cartographie et de Télédétection (CNCT), Ministry of defense became since 2009 the national mapping producer and supplier. For the production of its maps, the place names collection mainly rely on the field collection insured by CNCT surveyors. Generally the surveyors refer to the municipality (the Ministry of interior, responsible of names for populated places) of the surveyed area to get the place names’ data. For the rest, the surveyors refer to the inhabitants of the area to collect names.

Because of the lack of scrutiny and official processing tools to check the consistency of the data in the CNCT, the surveyors remain the source of the data. To be as accurate as possible in their collection, two persons are consulted about the same name. For some cases, a third person is asked for check.

In addition to the data collected for mapping, there are other projects where “volunteers” are involved. For example, the CNCT is building a national database of geolocation for the mining fleet (in progress). In this project, several teams of technicians NCNT have collected all data related to roads for the whole country, including names. The road names are taken directly from the roads and streets' panels. When they are not available, the general public remains the last resort. But although this method of crowd-sourcing data is performed by “professional groups”, the lack of predefined guidelines for the collection of data, of clear rules and methods to control the quality of the returned data remain the cause of the data reliability. We hope that such problems will be solved by the national commission of toponymy created in February 2013.

- Oct 14, 2013

1.1.1.1. **F1.1-Q2:** How willing is the public to be involved in such a project and how is data provision encouraged?

1.1.1.2. **F1.1-Q3:** How can we as national place-names authorities “control” the information we get through this new method of field collection and how can we use it in our official maps?
1.1.2. F1.2 Reliability

F1.2 Reliability
Created by Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu, last modified on Aug 08, 2014

Within this sub-site the reliability issues of using VGI and crowd-sourced data in authoritative products and services shall be discussed.

The following questions are to be discussed:

F1.2-Q1: Is the information received considered to be reliable and what are the main methods of quality control?
F1.2-Q2: What types of problems does this VGI data pose to your organisation?
F1.2-Q3: Have you developed any rules for using it?

3 Child Pages

- F1.2-Q1: Is the information received considered to be reliable and what are the main methods of quality control?
- F1.2-Q2: What types of problems does this VGI data pose to your organisation?
- F1.2-Q3: Have you developed any rules for using it?

1 Comment

Caroline Burgess

As Moderator for this section, I should like to summarise the contributions so far to the deliberations about the reliability of crowd-sourced data.

The degree of reliability, sub-section 1.2-Q1, has generated the most (only) discussion so far. Contributors acknowledge that the reliability of the data naturally depends on the source of the information and the collecting body having a disciplined approach to the analysis of the returned information. The advantages of having access to a large bank of freely-provided data need to be weighed up against the problems of managing so much information and ensuring its quality.

There are clearly some interesting projects in place out there and I would encourage you all to continue to contribute.

- Jun 28, 2013
1.1.2.1. F1.2-Q1: Is the information received considered to be reliable and what are the main methods of quality control?

F1.2-Q1: Is the information received considered to be reliable and what are the main methods of quality control?

Created by Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu, last modified by Caroline Burgess on Dec 13, 2012

To start this discussion, perhaps I can raise the point that the degree of reliability must surely depend on the method of crowd-sourcing and the audience targeted. For example, in the UK, when Ordnance Survey worked with the English Project (see F.1.1-Q2) to collect vernacular names from the general public, the data returned had to be very carefully scrutinised, despite clear rules having been laid down at the offset as to which informal names could be submitted. Some of the resulting names turned out to be too ephemeral, and some were considered too offensive for publication. It is difficult to quality-check such names, so Ordnance Survey and the English Project tended to consider names only where they had been submitted by 3 separate participants. Any such names were even then only collected as unofficial forms. A much more reliable and promising method of collection appears to be crowd-sourcing from professional groups, by e.g. collecting names information from the Ramblers' Association and the UK Coastguard. Both of these groups are currently being approached by Ordnance Survey.

6 Comments

Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu
Crowd-sourcing from professional groups sounds promising. Input could be retrieved from conservation associations and historical or cultural organisations, too. However, for establishing such cooperations personnel resources have to be allocated by the collecting body (very likely national mapping and cadastral agencies) and a good communication strategy has to developed comprising rules for procedures and quality checks.

* Dec 14, 2012

Caroline Burgess
This is true, but there are advantages for the collecting body which is given access to a large bank of names data which otherwise may be hard to gather. And often it will be given for free, as it could be said that professional groups had an interest in seeing their data collected for wider dissemination. A set of guidelines established before the collection takes place would help to ensure a level of quality was achieved.

* Feb 20, 2013

Douglas R. Caldwell
Caroline ... I would be interested in learning more about the verification process in the English Project. Who did the verification? Was it done by the 'crowd' or OS professionals? How much effort was it? Was there an estimate of the total time required for each contribution? How much total time was involved. Would be interested in this type of information from others as well.

I agree that crowd-sourcing can open up large resources that have previously been unavailable. However, as noted earlier, the potential issue with this approach is that crowd-sourcing quality control by professionals requires organizational resources and these can be 'overwhelmed' given a significant number of contributions. This can lead to contributor dissatisfaction if they feel their work is not making a difference or being used. It is very important for folks to learn about 'best practices' for avoiding this problem.
1.1.2.2. F1.2-Q2: What types of problems does this VGI data pose to your organisation?

1.1.2.3. F1.2-Q3: Have you developed any rules for using it?
1.2. Forum 2 – Definitions for gazetteers and data types

During the first session of Technical Committee II (E/CONF.101/57 and Add.1) it was recommended that the WG TDFG may consider to commence investigations into defining appropriate definitions for gazetteers and data types as this is obviously an issue for the WG TDFG.

[...] Within UNGEGN resolutions and UNGEGN recommendations and policies, and indeed within the wider research literature, there does not appear to be commonly accepted definitions for the terms ‘official’ and ‘unofficial’ as they relate to gazetteer data. Rather, there seems to be a proliferation of terminology used to define both the types of data which are incorporated into gazetteers, and the gazetteers themselves—ranging from official and authorised to unofficial and informal.

The need for the officially sanctioned gazetteers to be of a high quality in terms of accuracy and completeness of available data is increasing rapidly, and if we do not meet the needs of our communities, other unofficial providers will do so. We strongly encourage the member states of UNGEGN to commence the conversation on defining gazetteer and data types with the aim of developing robust definitions and increasing the relevance of the systems we currently maintain. There is potential to expand the scope of official data collection and name approval methods to allow for national gazetteers to incorporate both official and unofficial names which fulfil the information requirements of our communities. [E_CONF.101_57_The Four Faces of Toponymic Gazetteers]

The following sub-sites have been created within this forum in order to be able to monitor and streamline the discussions properly:

F2.1 Definition and content of gazetteers
F2.2 Differences between data types

The discussions will be monitored and streamlined by two co-moderators.

Moderation of Forum 2:
Ms. Leura Kostaeski (Australia)
Ms. Vita Strautniece (Latvia)

File | Modified
---|---
E_CONF.101_57_The Four Faces of Toponymic Gazetteers.pdf | Aug 24, 2012 by Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu
E_CONF.101_57_Add1_The Four Faces of Toponymic Gazetteers.pdf | Aug 24, 2012 by Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu

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2 Child Pages
F2.1 Definition and content of gazetteers
F2.2 Differences between data types
F2.1 Definition and content of gazetteers

1.2.1. Definition and content of gazetteers

This sub-site comprises the discussion regarding the understanding of different definitions of the term 'gazetteer'.

The term 'gazetteer' in an spatial data infrastructure (SDI) context might be considered as "any geospatial dataset which contains 'spatial identifiers'". These can be geographical names, postal codes or other indexes for indirect spatial referencing.

The intended use of 'gazetteers' in the European INSPIRE initiative (using 'geographic identifiers') followed ISO 19112. The schema from ISO 19112 was not used as-is to correct errors in that schema and allowed for a better integration in INSPIRE as a SDI. 'Gazetteers' here were simply intended as a channel to publish spatial data from the INSPIRE themes that allows others to use them in indirect spatial referencing.

It is obvious, that this technical SDI view on 'gazetteers' is different from the UN/EGN view on 'gazetteers':

"List of toponyms arranged in alphabetic or sequential order, with an indication of their location and preferably including variant names, type of (topographic) feature and other defining or descriptive information." (UN Glossary of the Terminology, 2002)

Within E_CONF.101_57_The+Four+Faces+of+Toponymic+Gazetteers it is suggested that gazetteers can be reimagined to be seen as having four faces, being:

- A record of official place naming processes.
- A repository of unofficial place names.
- A reflection of the cultural associations of place names.
- An information delivery mechanism.

The following questions are to be discussed:

F2.1-Q1: What is your understanding about the term 'gazetteer'?

F2.1-Q2: How many faces have your 'gazetteers' in your country/institution? (Please provide short descriptions)
F2.1-Q1: What is your understanding about the term 'gazetteer'?

The European project EuroGeoNames (EGN) has been (and still is) considered to be a 'web (gazetteer) services infrastructure'. This view relates with the UNSDI view. The 'gazetteers' / spatial data sets connected through EGN were considered to be "authoritative" or "official" (e.g. Germany) provided by NMCAs. However, certain data types are indicated as "non-official" besides "standardized", "recommended", "proposed" (e.g. Norway). Thus, EGN did not proceed to find definitions indicating different types of the spatial data sets/gazetteers connected as the European situation appeared to be too heterogeneous and any assignment might have caused more ambiguity.

- Nov 29, 2012

Caroline Burgess
The number of data definitions available clearly cannot help standardisation and leads to further confusion among those attempting to collect names information. Such ambiguities however only reinforce the fact that geographical names are living, changing elements and can often be a subjective choice. A gazetteer should be a repository for all geographical names information and should be in a format which is easily searchable, with good cross-references, so all of the unofficial variants can be traced back to the official forms.

- Feb 20, 2013

Vita Strautniece
At first, due the technical SDI view on 'gazetteers' is different from the UNGEFN view on 'gazetteers' and the SDI view is wider (and quite widespread), it seems to be appropriate to suggest the change of the UNGEFN term "gazetteer". My proposal is to rename it on "toponymic gazetteer".

At second, view on toponymic gazetteers in Latvia and our gazetteer preparation practice is in accordance with the UNGEFN definition ("List of toponyms arranged in alphabetic or sequential order, with an indication of their location and preferably including variant names, type of (topographic) feature and other defining or descriptive information.").

At third, in Latvia we use the term "toponymic gazetteer" mainly for toponymic products, comprising the minimum information proposed by UN (Resolution 14/1 National gazetteers (National Standardization. Recommendation E.)). For products, including more sophisticated data the term "toponymic dictionary" is in use. See Latvian examples of "gazetteer" (Coroise Gazetteer of Latvia, available at http://map.lga.gov.lv/index.php?lang=2&Path=3&txt_id=89) and "dictionary" ("Latvijas dēmīk." (Villages of Latvia. Names, Geographical Location), available from http://map.lga.gov.lv/index.php?lang=2&Path=3&txt_id=90).

- Jan 03, 2014
1.2.1.2. F2.1-Q2: How many faces have got your 'gazetteers' in your country/Institution? (Please provide short descriptions)
1.2.2. F2.2 Differences between data types

Within this sub-site the 'data types' issue shall be structured and evaluated. This can be done by comparing different data types provided through spatial data sets connected/linked through spatial data infrastructures or projects.

Whereas spatial data sets or gazetteers might considered to be "authoritative" (e.g. Norway) or "official" (e.g. Germany) and provided by official authorities (e.g. National Mapping and Cadastral Agencies), certain data types (e.g. geographical names) could be indicated as "non-official", "standardised", "recommended", "proposed" (e.g. Norway).

Experts from Australia have sketched an outline of the different terminology as an attempt to commence the conversation on how the gazetteers and their data can be defined (Figure 1 from the E/CONF.1 The Four Faces of Toponymic Gazetteers attached to the front page of the Forum 2).
1.2.2.1. F2.2-Q1: What indications for data types are provided through your spatial data sets?

In Latvia we often use only two terms: "official" and "unofficial" regarding the geographical names data. Official data are names (and associated to them information) derived from the decisions made by geographical names authorities (according to the definition in the UNGEGN Glossary, term 223: "Official name – toponym sanctioned by a legally constituted (e.g. national) names authority and applied within its jurisdiction"), "unofficial" – all other names (and information).

1.2.2.2. F2.2-Q2: Have users provided you with any any problems / difficulties / concerns using these data types?

1.2.2.3. F2.2-Q3: What is your opinion regarding the initial definitions, placed in the table above? Have you any additions, or other proposals? Questions?
1.3. Forum 3 – General feature types and categories

Discussion Forum 3 - General feature types and categories - was initiated by conference paper Feature Types for Global Gazetteers (Laura Kostanski et al., Australia) submitted to the Technical Committee IV session of the 10th UNCSGN (see attachments).

The paper describes the many challenges of developing global classifications for named features and requests the W6 TDFO to further discuss these issues thus feeding into the larger UN Spatial Data Infrastructure initiative (UNSDI) driven by the UN Geographic Information Working Group (UNGIWG).

The paper should provide a comprehensive introduction and basis for all discussions within this forum.

Four sub-sites have been created in order to better structure the discussions. Each sub-site has a short introduction and some initial questions/topics to be discussed. The sub-sites are:

F3.1 General discussion
F3.2 Requirements and use cases
F3.3 Reference materials and classifications

The discussions will be monitored and streamlined by two co-moderators.

Moderation of Forum 3:
Mr. Teemu Leskinen (Finland)
Ms. Nolma Friha (Tunisia)

The conference paper Feature Types for Global Gazetteers (Laura Kostanski et al., Australia) helps to commence investigations within the W6 TDFO. The paper and translated summaries in the 8 UN languages are uploaded to this site and can be commented.
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<tr>
<td>E_Conf.101_56_Add1_Feature Types for Global Gazetteers_s.pdf</td>
<td>Nov 22, 2012 by Pier-Giorgio Zachreddu</td>
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<td>Summary in Spanish</td>
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<td>E_Conf.101_56_Add1_Feature Types for Global Gazetteers_r.pdf</td>
<td>Nov 22, 2012 by Pier-Giorgio Zachreddu</td>
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<td>Summary in Russian</td>
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<td>E_Conf.101_56_Add1_Feature Types for Global Gazetteers_F.pdf</td>
<td>Nov 22, 2012 by Pier-Giorgio Zachreddu</td>
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<td>Summary in French</td>
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<td>Nov 22, 2012 by Pier-Giorgio Zachreddu</td>
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<td>Nov 22, 2012 by Pier-Giorgio Zachreddu</td>
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<td>Summary in Chinese</td>
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<td>Nov 22, 2012 by Pier-Giorgio Zachreddu</td>
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<td>Summary in Arabic</td>
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<td>E_CONF.101_56_Feature types for global gazetteers.pdf</td>
<td>Nov 22, 2012 by Pier-Giorgio Zachreddu</td>
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<td>Full paper (in English)</td>
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</tbody>
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Download All

3 Child Pages

- F3.1 General discussion
- F3.2 Requirements and use cases
- F3.3 Reference materials and classifications

1 Comment

Teemu Leskinen
From a co-moderator: To join the discussions within sub-sites F3.1...F3.4, please click the sub-site link and you will find the initial questions/topics to be discussed.

- Dec 19, 2012
1.3.1.  F3.1 General discussion

Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers / ... / Forum 3 – General feature types and categories

F3.1 General discussion
Created by Pier-Giorgio Zacchetti, last modified yesterday at 2:50 PM

This sub-site is for general discussion on the challenges and possibilities of developing harmonized named feature classifications for global purposes. Among other issues, paper E/CONF.101/56 lists the following challenges in the integration of multiple gazetteer sources:

- If a source gazetteer is classified using a coarser set of terms than the common list, any mapping is going to be ambiguous;
- Cultural and political sensitivities may result in difficulties in using a finely nuanced common term;
- The amount of effort required to reconcile and map many detailed source feature type lists to a common list may be large;
- As the common list evolves, for example a term is split into several related terms, the many mappings in use would need to be revisited;
- It will be difficult to develop and maintain a comprehensive multi-lingual aspect of a large common list; and
- Users would be overwhelmed by a comprehensive, finely nuanced and potentially overlapping set of reported feature types.

The following questions are to be discussed:

F3.1-Q1: What are the biggest challenges in developing global classifications with respect to different feature aspects?
F3.1-Q2: With regard to feature identity and classification, how do named features (e.g. in gazetteers) differ from spatial objects in general (e.g. in GISs)?
F3.1-Q3: Who should be in charge of the development and hosting of a possible new global feature classification and which procedures should be followed in the development?
F3.1-Q4: Do you have general or other questions or comments to this sub-site General discussion?

4 Child Pages
- F3.1-Q1: What are the biggest challenges in developing global classifications with respect to different feature aspects?
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- F3.1-Q4: Do you have general or other questions or comments to this sub-site General discussion?

1 Comment

Teemu Leskinen
From a co-moderator: To comment on a specific Question/topic F3.1-Q1...F3.1-Q4, please click the Question and then give your comment.

• yesterday at 12:15 PM
1.3.1.1. F3.1-Q1: What are the biggest challenges in developing global classifications with respect to different feature aspects?

Caroline Burgess
The main challenge has to be the fact that different countries have different influences which affect their local toponymy. For example, the landscape in northern Europe is very different to that of north Africa and the naming will reflect the topographic situation. Cultural and linguistic influences must also come into play.
* Feb 20, 2013

Vita Strautniec
On my opinion- also the existing already (sometimes quite deep-rooted) national and regional classifications!
There is also a big challenge - how to create a global classification somehow bringing them together in a rational way.
* Mar 18, 2013

Teemu Leskinen
I agree with Caroline and Vita and continue on the linguistic influences Caroline mentioned, for example the terms used for the natural and cultural features in one or different languages in different parts of the world. The original classifications by e.g. National Mapping or Names Authorities are typically developed in local languages (and local terms) rather than English, and even “general English translations” of these terms/words may depend on the local language and local natural and cultural circumstances. To create appropriate English terms (to be translated then into French etc...) and their definitions for “global feature classes” would be a very important but yet difficult task.
* Oct 07, 2013

Naima Friha
Also I think that there should levels of classifications according to the end-user applications.
1.3.1.2. F3.1-Q2: With regard to feature identity and classification, how do named features (e.g. in gazetteers) differ from spatial objects in general (e.g. in GISs)?

1.3.1.3. F3.1-Q3: Who should be in charge of the development and hosting of a possible new global feature classification and which procedures should be followed in the development?

1.3.1.4. F3.1-Q4: Do you have general or other questions or comments to this sub-site General discussion?
1.3.2. F3.2 Requirements and use cases

Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers / ... / Forum 3 - General feature types and categories

F3.2 Requirements and use cases
Created by Pier-Giorgio Zanchetti, last modified yesterday at 10:19 AM

This sub-site is for discussing use cases and requirements for appropriate global feature classifications and for introducing good practices and proposals for a classification that would meet the requirements set in paper E/CONF.101/56 and discussed here in this sub-site. The proposals may be based on existing classifications introduced in sub-site F3.2, or they may be new approaches, probably uploaded there, too. Because UNGEGN members typically represent national data providers, international initiatives (e.g. UNSDI Gazetteer Framework, UNECA African Geonyms Project, other UN bodies) are invited to participate, too.

The following questions are to be discussed:

F3.2-Q1: Can you list or describe use cases for an appropriate global classification for named features?
F3.2-Q2: What are the most important requirements for global feature classifications?
F3.2-Q3: There may be different requirements for different use cases. How should this be solved?
F3.2-Q4: Do you know good practices or have a proposal for a global feature classification that would meet (at least partly) the given requirements?
F3.2-Q5: Do you have general or other questions or comments to this sub-site Requirements and use cases?

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- F3.2-Q1: Can you list or describe use cases for an appropriate global classification for named features?
- F3.2-Q2: What are the most important requirements for global feature classifications?
- F3.2-Q3: There may be different requirements for different use cases. How should this be solved?
- F3.2-Q4: Do you know good practices or have a proposal for a global feature classification that would meet (at least partly) the given requirements?
- F3.2-Q5: Do you have general or other questions or comments to this sub-site Requirements and use cases?

1 Comment

Teemu Leskinen
From a co-moderator: To comment on a specific Question/topic F3.2-Q1...F3.2-Q5, please click the Question and then give your comment.

* yesterday at 12:16 PM
1.3.2.1. F3.2-Q1: Can you list or describe use cases for an appropriate global classification for named features

1.3.2.2. F3.2-Q2: What are the most important requirements for global feature classifications?

1.3.2.3. F3.2-Q3: There may be different requirements for different use cases. How should this be solved?

1.3.2.4. F3.2-Q4: Do you know good practices or have a proposal for a global feature classification that would meet (at least partly) the given requirements?

1.3.2.5. F3.2-Q5: Do you have general or other questions or comments to this sub-site Requirements and use cases?
### 1.3.3. F3.3 Reference materials and classifications

**Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers / ... / Forum 3 - General feature types and categories**

#### F3.3 Reference materials and classifications

Created by Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu, last modified yesterday at 3:10 PM

In this sub-site WG TDFG members may introduce, upload and discuss related reference materials and classifications. Materials may be available on the web (links to documents, gazetteer services etc.) or they may be uploaded in this sub-site by WG members (e.g. national classifications).

For each entry, please include a short introduction ("Comment" in the table, e.g. the system/data set in question and some characteristics of the data/classification), and an identifier ("Labels" in the table, F3-nnn-yyyy-mm-dd) for referencing purposes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td><a href="#">080208_EGN FEATURE CLASSIFICATION_3_0.pdf</a></td>
<td>Nov 22, 2012 by Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature classification developed for the EuroGeonames Project. It consists of 8 main classes and 27 sub-classes.</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="#">090918_Specimen_DE_Ernem_Translations.xls</a></td>
<td>Nov 22, 2012 by Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sheet/form for the translation of terms used in the EGN data model and the EGN feature classification. It comprises 6 folders including the respective information</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="#">bt5mv20dc_04ca.pdf</a></td>
<td>Nov 30, 2012 by Teemu Leskinen</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="#">DC_EDNME_2.pdf</a></td>
<td>Nov 20, 2012 by Teemu Leskinen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGN, France, DB NYME data specification (2009), 2 themes, 8 main classes and more than 100 sub-classes.</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="#">USGS-GNIS-Feature-Class-Definitions-link.pdf</a></td>
<td>Nov 30, 2012 by Teemu Leskinen</td>
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<td>U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Geographical Names Information System (GNIS) Feature Class Definitions (link), some 63 classes.</td>
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<td><a href="#">NRC-Geographical-Names-Feature-Types-Link.pdf</a></td>
<td>Nov 30, 2012 by Teemu Leskinen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural Resources Canada, Geographical Names, Feature Types (link), 3 main classes and some 40 sub-classes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Getty Thesaurus of Geographical Names, Place types (link), a vast, detailed classification.</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="#">EDINA-Unlock_link.pdf</a></td>
<td>Nov 30, 2012 by Teemu Leskinen</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDINA, Unlock, Feature types (link), a five-level hierarchy with 5 main classes.</td>
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1 Comment

**Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu**

R001 2012-11-22: The EGN feature classification has been developed separately as the existing pre-defined ones had been considered to be unsatisfactorily. To each location instance an EGN feature classification scheme describing the feature types is associated. It consists of 8 classes and 27 sub-classes. The EGN gazetteer model allows for different feature classifications to be used. However, the EGN feature classification is satisfactory for the purposes to which it is required (essentially, query filtering).

- Nov 22, 2012