Dissemination of geographical names

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(Canada)

Former Chair, UNGEGN
Process ……..

- Gathering names
  - field collection from local use
  - other sources

- Processing in office
  - to database, etc.

- Official recognition

- Dissemination
Disseminating the data

- Names are important to communication
- Maps, reports, etc. need up-to-date names
- Must distribute names data ... don’t be “best kept secret”!
- Different ways of doing this ....
Who needs to know?

- Government – generally less interested in the history and meaning!
  - Informing management for decision-making through maps, gazetteers, databases
- Public understand and appreciate the history and meaning of the names
  - Informed through data access, internet, media, the news, brochures, presentations, displays
Government – all levels

- Participate in special government activities or organized days
  - exhibitions and tours
  - create information leaflets

- Possibilities to sensitize managers at the regional and local level
  - by fieldwork or visits
  - by informing administrators of activities
  - by sharing the results
• **Place Names Day**
  - Riga, October 20, 2017
  - to honour 22 years of Laboratory of Toponymy
  - devoted to collection, investigation and usage
  - invited staff, specialists in standardization, linguists …
  - presentations on “Place names around us”
  - exhibition of work

• **Inspiration to launch interactive nationwide Place Names Bee – crowd-sourcing invitation**
  - collected names into Database of National Place Names
  - previously done several times since 1911 … 70,000 names
  - includes cultural, historical and linguistic information
Public interest in names

The Project

Introduction

Toponymy is the study of the meanings and origins of place names. Although a fascinating exercise in itself, it can also provide an appreciation of a nation's culture and understanding of social development. The challenge for the topographer in each country is the diversity of local languages; in Ghana, there are distinct indigenous spoken languages (see List of Ghanaian languages).

Goal

At the moment the project is still in the data-collection stage. Results. If information of sufficient quantity and quality becomes available, it will eventually be possible, but in the meantime, this website is being maintained.

Scope

Although it would be much easier to limit the scope of the project to just the national language, Akan, it is the intention to include place names collected from all the national languages of Ghana, as well as from the English language. This is largely due to the need to include place names collected from the British colonial era, which are still prevalent today.
New Zealand – analyzing toponyms

- Identifying Māori or English within toponym
- Researchers used NZ Gazetteer of Place Names
- Shows distribution of Māori names
- Was step in developing computer program to identify Māori words in English text
  - Other applications

http://insights.nzherald.co.nz/article/our-place-names/
Official name – use of unofficial name

Canada – Yukon – Dawson

Dawson

Weather Forecast: Dawson, YT

Current Weather: 9°C
Official name – use of unofficial name

Canada – New Brunswick – Rivière Saint-Jean / Saint John River

**Official name**

- **Name:** Rivière Saint-Jean
- **Language:** French
- **Other Official Name:** Saint John River
- **Other Official Language:** English
- **Status:** Official
- **Province/Territory:** New Brunswick
- **Feature type:** River

**Unofficial version**
Geographical Names Office

- UNGEGN Information Bulletin
- Maps, Atlases Gazetteers
- Digital data
- Brochures Guides Manuals
- Web site
- Road signs
- Census data
- Enquiries Media
- Displays Videos Exhibits
- Tours Education
Mongolia
... database, map, gazetteer
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>ENTITY</th>
<th>LOC 1</th>
<th>LOC 2</th>
<th>MAP</th>
<th>POSITION</th>
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<td>BC</td>
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<td>QC</td>
<td>Minganie</td>
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<td>Abbey</td>
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Special gazetteer

- 17 community based regions of Nunavik (QC)
- some 10,000 names for ~7800 locations
- enhance knowledge and preserve culture
Gazetteers

- Reference listings of geographical names, usually arranged alphabetically, and including various attributes
  - Gazetteer indexes to atlases
  - Geographical dictionaries
  - Gazetteers for maps of particular scale
  - Concise national gazetteers
  - Special gazetteers (e.g. N. Quebec, Canada)
  - On-line gazetteers/databases
Some other promotional ideas

- Media
  - radio/TV programs on local toponymy
- Open House ... display on toponymy
- Community events ... booth about toponyms
- Brochure re toponyms of a particular area
- Buttons, pens, postcards, bookmarks to create an interest
Seeing the world through different eyes

Perhaps try imaginative ideas!
UNEGGN Information Bulletin

- Two each year since 1987
- Updates on significant name decisions, courses, publications; theme issues
  - UN contacts
  - … http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo
  - … geoinfo_unsd@un.org
  - Needs your information!
Promoting your names programme

- Not only promoting the approved names
- Important that management is aware of your activities (e.g. report from training)
- Promotion through cultural activities
  - e.g. Finland in European Heritage Days
  - Geographical names day activities
- If planning a new/improved programme
  - Need a “road map” to move forward to sell the concept
Toponymy at the focus

- Geography
- Languages
- Oral tradition
- Politics
- Other
- History
- Culture
- Psychology
Some questions asked by mapmakers

- What does “More” mean on Russian maps?
- What status do Basque and Catalan names have in Spain? (Saami names in Norway?)
- What are the first level administrative divisions of India?
- What is the correct romanized form of Αθήνα? of Київ?
- Are there dual names in New Zealand - if so, how do I show them on maps?
Towards toponymic guidelines

- Many of these questions are difficult to answer without good, current reference material
  - particularly difficult in
    - bilingual/multilingual situations
    - where different writing systems used
    - where exonyms exist

- UN .... “Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors”

Template for guidelines

- **Languages**
  - official, national and minority languages
    - Legal status, spelling and grammar rules; pronunciation; dialects

- **Names authorities**
  - national and provincial; legal aspects

- **Source material**
  - maps, atlases, gazetteers, databases

- **Glossary of words needed to understand maps**

- **Abbreviations used on maps**

- **Distinguishing toponyms from other type on maps**

- **Administrative maps**
Bolzano
Bozen

VIA ALTO ADIGE
SÜDTIROLERSTRASSE