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CROWDSOURCING (2)

Crowdsourced Geospatial Data

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Wikipedia defines 'crowdsourcing' as the "act of outsourcing tasks traditionally performed by an employee or contractor to a large group of people or community (a crowd)". While crowdsourcing sometimes refers to programming tasks, it more often – in a geospatial context – refers to data collection. Ubiquitous location-enabled mobile devices incorporating telephones, cameras, on-board sensor maps and location services enable citizens to contribute location-based and descriptive data, whether intentionally or passively, into a broad range of applications. A particular characteristic, and advantage, of crowdsourced geospatial data is that it comes from a myriad of widely distributed locations – literally anywhere people and their devices are located – resulting in previously unheard-of potential for large-scale geospatial data collection.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) may not have produced major international agreements, but it was a lively forum for NGO crowdsourcing discussions. In a Crowdsourcing Week conference in May 2012 (1).

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