

Exploring the Power of Spatial Thinking

More than 700 educators, administrators, researchers, librarians, and museum professionals from more than 35 countries attended the ESRI Education User Conference (EdUC), from 2nd to 5th August 2008. The EdUC is an inspiring and collaborative forum designed specifically for the global education community to explore the use of geographic information system (GIS) technology across disciplines.

Conference attendees were able to participate in a wide variety of sessions and activities, from illustrated paper sessions, where GIS users creatively depict topics such as building a GIS program, to taking the technology for a test drive in the hands-on computer labs. The EdUC EXPO also gave educators the chance to examine the latest geospatial products and services for furthering their current GIS projects or plans for the future. Plus, opportunities, such as special interest group meetings, the Geo Treasure Hunt, and the EdUC Lounge, gave visitors a way to connect with others with similar interests, have a little fun, and meet directly with ESRI staff.

Dr. Anne Knowles, professor of geography at Middlebury College in Vermont, gave the Keynote Address during the EdUC Plenary Session. An alumnus of Duke University and the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Knowles is also an editor of several books including *Placing History*. Knowles discussed the importance of geography in historical research and education.

Whether gaining fresh ideas to infuse into their teaching and research or accessing resources to launch or grow GIS programs and activities, EdUC attendees were offered an in-depth look at GIS in education, practical knowledge and skills to take back to work, and essential tools for meeting specific needs.

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