

The Production of Mapping and the Mapping of Production



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It must be recognised that in contemporary cartography, 99% of the maps which are conceived are 'temporary' productions, created by 'amateur' map-makers using geo-browsers or other software tools (including GIS) and displayed on screens ranging from mobile phones and satnav systems to military aircraft cockpits and emergency planning centres. Such maps disappear when the 'off' switch is pressed. Traditional map production

systems involving hard-copy output and managed by professional organisations are still important, however, particularly in sectors such as national mapping, atlas production and tourist cartography.

The ICA Commission on the Management and Economics of Map Production has examined such activity in recent years. Its terms of reference for the 2007-2011 period covered (i) production management knowledge in economics, planning and organising, cost calculations, guidelines for production, quality assurance and quality control; (ii) surveys of software and hardware, including tools to help in management, scheduling, flow-charting and educational aspects; and (iii) addressing new working practices in areas such as web publishing, archiving and print-on-demand.

Summer schools took place in Urumqi, China, in 2007 and 2008 to address these issues. Also, workshops were organised in Gent, Belgium, in July 2009 and in Santiago, Chile, in November 2009. These looked at specific subjects such as (i) formal description of production flow charts; (ii) economic aspects such as value, price of geographical data and map products; and (iii) map production technology in less-favoured countries, and how technological help and transfer of management skills can be effective. A further workshop in Orlando, USA, in November 2010 looked at (i) dataware, the use of open data in different applications in GI and map production, also including aspects of crowdsourcing; (ii) standardisation, especially for the formal description of the cartographic production line; and (iii) the value chain of geographic information. An extensive user survey was organised during the February 2010 IMTA Conference and Trade Show in Bayonne, France. Lectures by Commission members on topics such as measuring map quality and map economics were well received.

The continuation of the Commission has been approved with a slightly different name: Map Production and GeoBusiness. Its new terms of reference for 2011-2015 include an appreciation of the importance of business models to those organisations which are involved in practical map production. The Commission is directed to:

- Enhance the study of map production and process management, map economics and geobusiness;
- Research the impact of modern communication methods on map production, business models, change management and design thinking;
- Research the impact of service- oriented architectures and future technologies on map production, publishing and archiving;
- Encourage international collaboration on the study of map production and geobusiness with particular emphasis on bridging research, government and commercial sectors;
- Participate and contribute to activities of other relevant ICA interest groups (e.g. Commission on Use and User Issues, National Mapping Organisations).

Those interested in participating in such tasks are encouraged to contact the Commission chair (e-mail in the column to the left).