The Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) and the Web3D Consortium will work together to further the development of the Geospatial Web, a movement already underway that embraces many values and goals that the Web3D community shares - open standards of course, but also open access to data, community, and the positive transformative power of the Web.

The vision and center of gravity of this “Geospatial Web” is well articulated in the OGC’s WMS and WFS specifications and the activities that have been spawned around them, such as Geoserver & degree (reference open source WFS & WMS servers, respectively), OpenLayers (a Web 2.0/AJAX API for displaying map data that works in standard browsers), and GeoRSS.

The WMS and WFS specifications define open standards service structures and formats for delivering map data (including constituent elements like layers and features) over the Internet. Web 2.0/AJAX is a perfect complement to WMS/WFS, and all of this is fundamentally more open than traditional closed map data re-purposed to the Web (insert your favourite GIS company, closed GIS data source, or proprietary 3D earth browser here).

But the WMS and WFS initiatives are principally targeted to 2D. What Web3D’s X3D Earth initiative can contribute might be something like a “Web Viewpoint Service” - the ability to query and deliver geospatial data from a perspective other than a 2D bounding box with a zoom function - i.e. the 3D Geospatial Web.

What would a “Web Viewpoint Service” return to the client side viewer? It could be X3D models, of course, but it needs to be more. It could, and perhaps should also be a more comprehensive solution that includes 3D with text overlays, audio, and video (e.g. augmented reality), 3D waypoints, real-time weather, real-world physics, cross-sectioning, even 3D PDFs - whatever the client requesting wants.

Find the complete weblog entry.

Source: Open Geospatial Consortium