



Historical maps and spatial data infrastructures. Challenges and opportunities within the INSPIRE directive.

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Historical maps represent a very rich and important legacy of the European countries. Such documents, used along with new technologies such as the Internet, GIS and satellite systems, can make the natural environment evolution more easy to understand by the decision makers, policy makers and the public. In the recent years, a number of European initiatives and projects aimed to establish technical standards and policies to integrate and share environmental data through information systems. The most important initiatives being INSPIRE (Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community), SEIS (Shared Environmental Information System) and GMES (Global Monitoring for Environment and Security). Unfortunately, none of this important trans-national actions does not include a dedicated component for cartographic heritage. The gap between the state archives and libraries, holders of cartographic heritage in most European countries, and the geospatial community is present at both technical and policy level. Even so, many of the technical specifications and concepts brought into the geospatial domain by the initiatives mentioned above, especially by INSPIRE, can be successfully used to create on-line systems to facilitate the old maps discovery and retrieval through standard web services.

The paper explores how the gap between the two communities can be diminished through the use of open standards and presents a key study focused on the community portal geo-spatial.org, where standards (like WMS, WMS-C, CSW), open source software and collaborative approach are used to digitally preserve and interactively disseminate an important amount of historical maps.