Geophysical Research Abstracts
Vol. 14, EGU2012-10352, 2012
EGU General Assembly 2012

GEO Label: User and Producer Perspectives on a Label for Geospatial Data

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One of the aims of the Science and Technology Committee (STC) of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) was to establish a GEO Label– a label to certify geospatial datasets and their quality. As proposed, the GEO Label will be used as a value indicator for geospatial data and datasets accessible through the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS). It is suggested that the development of such a label will significantly improve user recognition of the quality of geospatial datasets and that its use will help promote trust in datasets that carry the established GEO Label. Furthermore, the GEO Label is seen as an incentive to data providers. At the moment GEOSS contains a large amount of data and is constantly growing. Taking this into account, a GEO Label could assist in searching by providing users with visual cues of dataset quality and possibly relevance; a GEO Label could effectively stand as a decision support mechanism for dataset selection.

Currently our project – GeoViQua, – together with EGIDA and ID-03 is undertaking research to define and evaluate the concept of a GEO Label. The development and evaluation process will be carried out in three phases. In phase I we have conducted an online survey (GEO Label Questionnaire) to identify the initial user and producer views on a GEO Label or its potential role. In phase II we will conduct a further study presenting some GEO Label examples that will be based on Phase I. We will elicit feedback on these examples under controlled conditions. In phase III we will create physical prototypes which will be used in a human subject study. The most successful prototypes will then be put forward as potential GEO Label options.

At the moment we are in phase I, where we developed an online questionnaire to collect the initial GEO Label requirements and to identify the role that a GEO Label should serve from the user and producer standpoint. The GEO Label Questionnaire consists of generic questions to identify whether users and producers believe a GEO Label is relevant to geospatial data; whether they want a single “one-for-all” label or separate labels that will serve a particular role; the function that would be most relevant for a GEO Label to carry; and the functionality that users and producers would like to see from common rating and review systems they use. To distribute the questionnaire, relevant user and expert groups were contacted at meetings or by email. At this stage we successfully collected over 80 valid responses from geospatial data users and producers.

This communication will provide a comprehensive analysis of the survey results, indicating to what extent the users surveyed in Phase I value a GEO Label, and suggesting in what directions a GEO Label may develop. Potential GEO Label examples based on the results of the survey will be presented for use in Phase II.