

How can you use the gazetteer?

The gazetteer can be used:

- as a reference tool for researchers and teaching staff for on-line reference and catalogue purposes;
- to aid geographic searching by other information services;
- to assist in the geographic indexing of information resources.

How can it help other information services?

Geographic searching is very powerful and whilst a number of information services now support this, many are limited to place name and/or postcode searching. If a service wants to support more types of searching, it has to hold enough spatial data to allow a users query to be translated from one form to another. For example, an address could be translated into national grid co-ordinates. A gazetteer, such as geoXwalk, can be used to perform this translation (or 'cross-walking').

How does it assist in geographic indexing?

At present, little information is geographically referenced, as this can be a time-consuming process. The project team is building a tool which will assist cataloguers, indexers and metadata creators by semi-automatically geographically indexing text descriptions. This software will read electronic forms of documents and/or metadata records and try to identify geographic names, features and other geographies.

What are the main aims and objectives?

- to continue to develop and enhance the service in preparation for roll out as a shared service;
- to trial the demonstrator within the context of servicing existing JISC services and investigate such issues relating to performance, scalability and usability;
- to model and incorporate historic content within the gazetteer and address feature versioning issues;
- to evaluate and enhance the textual analyses and disambiguation capabilities of the geoparser for semi-automatic indexing of resources.

If you are interested in trialling the demonstrator service please contact the project manager (contact details can be found on the back of this leaflet).

Whom can you contact for more information?

The projects are being jointly developed by EDINA (Data Library, University of Edinburgh) and the UK Data Archive (University of Essex). To receive further announcements about the projects please join our mailing list <http://jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/go-geo-geoxwalk>.

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EDINA

UK Data Archive

JISC

Go-Geo!

The Geo-Data Portal
Project

<http://www.gogeo.ac.uk>

geoXwalk

Gazetteer Project

<http://www.geoxwalk.ac.uk>

Providing Access to
Geo-spatial Data and
Related Resources
within the Higher
Education Community.

EDINA

UK Data Archive

Go-Geo!

Go-Geo! is a one-year JISC funded project, to continue development of a geo-spatial data portal ready for roll out to full service.

What are geo-spatial data?

Geo-spatial data is a term used to cover any data with geographic references, for example, Ordnance Survey national grid references, postal addresses, place names or the names of administrative areas.

What is a portal?

This portal is an online resource discovery tool that allows for the identification and retrieval of metadata records. These metadata records describe the content, quality, condition and other characteristics of geo-spatial datasets.

What makes the Go-Geo! portal different?

Go-Geo! is a UK portal which supports geo-spatial searching as well as the more traditional topic or keyword forms of searching.

A gazetteer is required to support the portal, as most searches will involve spatial searching and users will need a rich resource of place names. The Go-Geo! service uses the gazetteer that is being developed by its sister project, geoXwalk.

What will it do?

The Go-Geo! portal will allow you to access geo-spatial metadata records by cross-searching a number of databases. As well as searching for datasets held within the UK higher and further education community, you are able to search the NGDF Ggateway and its directory services. This gives you access to data produced by other GI communities in the UK. As use of the service increases more metadata records will be added from UK higher and further education.

Other features are also being added to improve the value of the data identified and retrieved, including the ability to find other related resources such as books, photographs, learning resources and articles. Already users have access to information on maps, books, photographs and projects. These are found by searching the JISC Information Environment and/or other online information services. The novel aspect is the ability to search for these resources and constrain the results to the geographic area or place you are interested in.

How can you use the portal?

You will be able to search by:

- free text;
- geographic locations using an interactive map;
- date;
- resource types;

Results of searches can be printed or emailed to you.

How can you find information on related resources?

Information about resources associated with the service can be found on the left-hand side of the Go-Geo! homepage. For example, software and training courses.

What are the main aims and objectives?

- to develop the geo-spatial portal to a point where it is suitable for roll out as a full service;
- to promote the possibilities of a fully functioning service to potential users to potential users;
- to trial the service such that issues relating to performance and usability may be measured;
- to promote within the HE and FE communities the benefits of the ability to process material at a geographical level.

A trial portal service is available from 17 November 2003. A series of metadata workshops will be held from November onwards. The trial service can be found at <http://www.gogeo.ac.uk>.

If you would like to include your geo-spatial datasets in the portal, or host a metadata workshop please contact Tony Mathys (tmathys@essex.ac.uk).



geoXwalk is a JISC-funded project that is building a digital gazetteer service for enhancing geographical querying of resources.

What is a gazetteer?

Typically, a gazetteer is a list of places together with their associated geographic location, given as a latitude and longitude co-ordinate, or an Ordnance Survey grid co-ordinate. Occasionally, other information such as the population or size of a place may be included.

What is different about the geoXwalk gazetteer?

The geoXwalk gazetteer is different from a traditional gazetteer in a number of ways:

- places are classified into types, for example, city, river, lake;
- places are recorded with their geographic 'footprint', for example, settlements represented as areas, rivers as lines (this differs from traditional gazetteers which represent places as points, even though they may cover quite large areas or may be linear features such as rivers);
- the database not only comprises details about places but also other types of 'geographies', including postcode areas, parishes and electoral districts;
- the current focus of the gazetteer is 'near contemporary' data, but we are looking to include historical information as well.

So what benefits does the structure of the geoXwalk gazetteer offer you?

The geoXwalk database will allow you to ask questions, such as "where is Ormskirk?" or "what is to be found at grid ref. NT 258 728?". More complicated questions such as "What is the county town of Shropshire?" and "on which river is York situated?" can also be answered.