



Editorial

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1. Introduction

It is with great excitement that I am penning the editorial for the very first issue of the *Journal of Maps* (JoM). JoM is a unique venture that hopes to establish an international, inter-disciplinary, culture of map publication, within an open-access, open peer-review, framework. This short editorial briefly presents the road we have travelled to reach this publication, along with some of the more important issues we have had to contend with.

2. Development of JoM

JoM emerged out of the desire for myself and colleagues at the Kingston Centre for GIS to publish bespoke maps. As an applied research group we collect (and map) spatial data for a variety of geographic disciplines, however the publication of such material is difficult; a cursory survey of geography-related journals showed that map publication was uncommon and usually incurred high page costs. Maps are central to the process of understanding within spatially aware disciplines, through the use of maps to analyse, store and present spatial information. The lack of map publication is an undesirable effect of the modern publication process and weakens the value of research findings.

JoM was established to redress the imbalance in map publication; the high page costs of printed maps is unavoidable and therefore JoM was only viable as an *e-journal*. This constraint presented the opportunity for us to “self-publish”, thereby by-passing the whole commercial publication



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process. It was at this stage that we decided JoM should be *open-access*, with a nominal author fee to cover running costs. From the outset, JoM was envisaged as a charity, dedicated to map publication.

The main strategic elements of JoM were formalised in October 2003; subsequently key operational features needed to be completed. Electronic self-publication meant the need for a website and a small number of staff, with a low budget, suggested automation of as many administrative tasks as possible. A “customer-management” front-end, visible to all visitors, is used to take care of user-registration, map submission and document serving. Key to the success of the site was the “peer-review” back-end that is used by editorial staff. The back-end automates key processes of peer-review and presents all interaction to the “user” (e.g. referee, author) *through the website*. The integrated front and back-ends maintain editorial interaction, whilst increasing efficiency. A fully testable “front-end” was ready in March 2004, with the full system live by May 2004.

Whilst website development was underway, we needed to recruit an international editorial board, with a wide range of academic interests, who were sympathetic to map publication. We specifically recruited researchers (listed at the end of this editorial) from strongly geographic disciplines (e.g. geography, geology, cartography) as this is where we believe our core market is.

Although staff at the Centre for GIS have been involved in reviewing manuscripts, editing special issues and editing journals, we had little experience in establishing a new title. In other words, at the outset we weren't sure what needed to be put in place! As it turned out, the more mundane aspects of establishing a journal were quite significant. The journal needed to be established as a charity and have a governing document, charitable objects and trustees. In order to become a registered charity in the United Kingdom, proof of assets are required and this involved setting up a bank account, as well as a merchant account to take payment of submission fees. Operation of the website involved purchasing commercial webspace and registering with the Data Protection Agency (a formal requirement in the United Kingdom for an entity holding personal data). This all forms the unfortunate “chattel” that comes with the freedom of being able to self-publish.

This Issue

In the spirit of the international and inter-disciplinary ethos of JoM, the first issue has a wide variety of material from many disciplines. They are truly indicative of the broad scope of JoM and the value of mapping to a wide array of disciplines. This issue has different map types (ranging from topographic to thematic) and sizes (ranging from A4 to larger than A0!), from international authors, in a variety of different fields. They incorporate disparate datasets and use a mixture of alternate software to produce their final output. The presentation of spatial data remains the single unifying theme, yet produces an amazing range of material.

Whilst the fate of British Grand Prix and Jaguar F1 team hung in the balance last year, the significance of motor racing has never been more important to Northamptonshire (UK). Field depicts the location of race circuits and related motorsport industries in Northamptonshire, UK (Size: A4; covering 5800 km²), stressing the significance of location and industrial clustering. This thematic map could not contrast more strongly than with the topographic map of Ventura *et al* who present geomorphological mapping (Size: A0) of the Somma-Vesuvius volcanic complex in Italy (covering 340 km²). This work is based upon digital elevation models and brings together a variety of quantitative analyses to produce this interpreted map. Continuing the geological theme, a traditional structural geology map is presented by Chew. Extensive geological field mapping forms the basis of this map of the structural geology of Achill Beg, western Ireland (part of the Fair Head Clew Bay line). At 1.82 m by 2.57 m (covering 13.75 km²) it is a massive map, yet all detail is presented at 12pt type!! This clearly demonstrates the power and flexibility of electronic publication; there are no edges to data stored electronically and this benefit can be passed on to the reader. Like Chew, Carrivick and Twigg use data from field mapping in their geomorphological map (Size: A3) of jökulhlaup influenced terrain in Iceland (covering 1000 km²). This is supplemented with a photogrammetrically produced digital elevation model using GPS based ground control collected during field work. Jansson has also produced a detailed glacial geomorphological map, however this is of north-central Québec-Labrador, Canada (Size: A2), covering a much larger area than Carrivick and Twigg (180,000 km²) and is based upon stereo air photo interpretation.

Data Issues

The review process for this first issue has highlighted key issues relating to data access. The access to, and use of, data in analysis and subsequent map publication is fundamental to research in spatial disciplines. Highlights of recent advances in data access include the availability of Shuttle Radar Topography Mission (SRTM; [Rabus et al, 2003](#)) digital elevation model (DEM) data ([SRTM, 2004](#)) and the ever-increasing Global Land Cover Facility ([GLCF, 2004](#)) Landsat archive. Both of these are examples of valuable international datasets, illustrating the generally favourable open-access policies of data collected by the United States government. Other countries have more restrictive policies with respect to data use and publication. Unfortunately current copyright restrictions have prevented publication of a map that has been reviewed and accepted by JoM. Lloyd and Greatbatch submitted a map to JoM (Size: A3) depicting the results of a multi-criteria evaluation (MCE) for the location of the fictional Blandings estate contained within P.G. Wodehouse novels. Based upon Ordnance Survey data, the copyright restrictions on electronic publication are such that this particular map is unpublishable. JoM wishes to actively contribute to the debate on map data and copyright, with a view to lessening the restrictions on map publication. Hopefully the Lloyd and Greatbatch map will be published in a future issue. Severe copyright restrictions are regrettable and we hope that over the coming years, national mapping agencies, worldwide, can be less restrictive.

Thanks

I would like to say particular thanks to Mike Brown for website development, Dr Ken Field for day-to-day assistance and Claire Ivison for cartographic support. I have had many helpful conversations with colleagues concerning all aspects of the journal. Professor Chris Clark and Dr Ken Field have been particularly thought provoking! Many thanks also to the whole JoM team (listed below), particularly the editorial panel who have been academically supportive of the journal and provide the “internal commentary” for all editorial decisions.

I would like to thank Vanessa Lawrence of the Ordnance Survey (OS) for

writing the Foreword to our first issue. The OS is a hugely influential mapping agency both nationally (within the UK) and internationally. Finally I would like to thank the authors (current and future!). JoM would not exist without material to publish; it is here to serve the academic community and I hope it will continue to do so for many years to come.

The Future

I firmly believe that the future is bright for JoM. As a journal we are not constrained by commercial pressures and can editorially and technologically develop as we see fit. However the next few years are key to our development as an inter-disciplinary resource. Some key goals we wish to achieve in the future:

- become citation listed. Citation listing is important for many academics wishing to submit material to peer-reviewed journals.
- increase our output from a broadly bi-annual publication to quarterly, publishing in the region of 20-40 articles per year.
- develop strong inter-disciplinary links.

The other exciting aspect of our development relates to open-access publishing. The UK, along with many other western countries, is beginning to push for open-access publication as the relatively high cost burden (to libraries) of journal subscription is not sustainable in the current research funding climate. The UK academic community is currently exploring a variety of avenues designed to push open-access publication. Many charities rely on funds generated from journal publication to finance their activities and are therefore reluctant to move to open access publication. JoM believes that e-only self-publication is a methodology that could successfully be followed by other charities and aims to take a leading role in this area by developing, and making available, its technology to other charities.

Conclusions

I hope this issue of JoM demonstrates the breadth and quality of maps and mapping projects that are currently underway. I have been encouraged by the tremendous interest in the journal, as well as the consistent high quality of material submitted. Maps are central to the vitality of spatial disciplines and JoM is well placed as an inter-disciplinary entity to serve the publication and data repository needs of researchers and practitioners alike.

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