

Group Systems Overview

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Purpose

Soza in conjunction with Penn State conducted a 2 day session to review and recommend proposed modifications and additions to the draft Federal Geographic Data Committee Utilities and Environmental Hazards geospatial data standards. The underlying purpose was to make the proposed spatial data standards relevant to Pennsylvania.

Methodology in Support of Spatial Data Standards Summit Session

The session approach capitalized on the use of Decision Support Groupware, specifically Ventana's GroupSystems for windows to collect and analyze information provided by the Spatial Data Standards Summit participants. The groupware environment ensured that the maximum amount of information was collected from the session participants during the limited time available. The GroupSystems approach is designed to encourage collaboration and improved productivity. GroupSystems is a collection of tools that support various group processes such as brainstorming, group validation, list building, information gathering, voting, categorizing, prioritizing and consensus building. The tools are used interactively by participants at separate workstations or subgroups gathered around a terminal.

There are several preplanning tasks to complete before running a meeting. These include identifying a clearly stated objectives and outcomes of the meeting and selecting the appropriate methodology to achieve meeting success. The Spatial Standards Summit used a two tiered approach that involved phase 1: Learn TSSDS or the information sharing portion of the session. Several presentations and speakers were invited in order for participants to gain a familiarity with TSSDS. Phase 2: Evaluate TSSDS, after the participants achieved a basic understanding of TSSDS and the functionality they were asked to evaluate in subgroups assigned Classes/Types based on the need for spatial data standards within the state of Pennsylvania.

The approach utilized subgroup work to capture comments and recommendations in the area of Utilities and Environmental Hazards, regarding the following topics:

- Class/Type Definitions
- Class/Type Content
- TSSDS Structure
- TSSDS Presentation
- Implementation Approach

Due to time constraints participants were divided into 6 subgroups: 3 Utilities groups and 3 Environmental Hazards groups, each dealt with pre-assigned Classes/Types and commented on the topics mentioned above only in their areas. If time permitted groups were able to briefly review other classes/types in their set.

The team discussed future actions to implement spatial standards in Pennsylvania. The contents of all group work is located in various tabs throughout the report. The underlying purpose was to make the proposed spatial data standards relevant to Pennsylvania. The group as a whole agreed that spatial standards were needed, the question is how they standards should be implemented. Another closing discussion focused around the group's responsibility and next steps to achieve spatial standards that all participants could live with.