

Education Committee Annual Report Item

About the Committee

The OSGeo Education Committee is focused on building a repository of educational material related to geoscience in general, and open source geospatial software specifically.

Key Accomplishments

A Memorandum of Understanding between OSGeo and the International Cartographic Association was established in September 2011 and not reported previously. The objectives of the MOU can be found at http://wiki.osgeo.org/wiki/MOU_ICA. ICA-OSGeo Lab Network is the official title of this network and OSGL (Open Source Geospatial Labs) as the acronym to be used for the url, domain name, etc. Individual labs (those already established and those in future) are free to select the names they wish. For example, the lab at the University of Nottingham's Malaysia Campus is called "Open-source Geospatial Research

Lab." The lab at North Carolina State University is entitled the "OSGeo Research and Education Laboratory", and Newcastle University's lab refers to itself as the "Open Source Geospatial Lab."

Under the leadership of Suchith Anand and other colleagues at the University of Nottingham, content continues to be added in the E-Learning for the Open Geospatial Community (ELOGeo) web-database repository hosted at U of N.

Over 2012, again, thanks largely to the leadership and energy of Suchith Anand at the University of Nottingham, UK, twenty-four ICA-OSGeo labs have been established, with at least one on every continent on the globe. A dedicated mailing list for participants of these labs has been established.

The OSGL website is being developed and will be graciously hosted by Manuel Haro and his colleagues at the National Lab for FOSS in Mexico.

Subsets of the OSGeo education group have been actively going after grants to support our collective objectives. One of the most active participants is Phil Davis of the GeoTech Center at DelMar college in Texas, USA [4] who has submitted a grant proposal to the US National Science Foundation to create a

“FOSS4G US Academy.” The goal of the grant, if funded, will be to create a full curriculum on open source geospatial science and technologies that complies with the United States Department of Labor’s Geospatial Technology Competency Model [5].

Others in the group are actively working on another proposal to support collective action between the international nodes of the OSGL network.

Areas for Improvement

With the significant exception of the efforts of the GeoTech center and the efforts by colleagues at the University of Nottingham, the committee is somewhat stalled in our efforts to establish collective-action around the production and sharing of educational content that is open access and can support new derivative work. This remains an important focus of our group’s collective efforts for the coming year.

We need stronger and more active connections between the Education group and the activities going on by the OSGeo software and local chapter groups. Members of the latter groups

are encouraged to communicate more through the OSGeo Education listserv on their education-related activities. Education is one important way uptake in OSGeo technologies will occur, and we should be communicating and leveraging and sharing local chapter educational efforts and experiences. Through doing so, effective and successful local chapter educational efforts can and should be replicated elsewhere.

There is a subset of faculty subscribers to the OSGeo education listserv who are quite active and are working together to move our collective efforts forward. However, there is a large number of listserv “lurkers” who are subscribed to the list but are rarely heard from. That behavior is fine; however we encourage others on the OSGeo edu list to become more active in their contributions to the group. Again, one way to do this would be to openly share any educational materials they develop with the community.

Outlook for 2013

2012 was an active year for the OSGeo education and curriculum project largely as a result of significant leadership and effort by several

individuals in our community. In 2013 the committee is hopeful that we will land one or more grants to help keep the committee's collective efforts going.

The establishment and growth of the 24-node ICA-OSGeo Lab Network [1] is a significant development. One of the committee's goals in 2013 is to continue this growth over 2013. A second goal is to move beyond the important first step of establishing such a network toward the establishment of collaboration across nodes in the network in both research and education related to open source geospatial science and technologies.

Discussions are already underway to hold regular virtual meetings and webinars across nodes in this network. We will advertise these activities both through the ICA-OSGeo Lab listserv and through the more general OSGeo education group listserv.