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# Dissertation Research: The Impact of Law and Information Policy on the Dissemination and Commercialization of Spatial Databases: A North American -European Community

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**Final Report for Period:** 06/1995 - 05/1996**Submitted on:** 07/12/2003**Principal Investigator:** Onsrud, Harlan J.**Award ID:** 9506485**Organization:** University of Maine**Title:**

Dissertation Research: The Impact of Law and Information Policy on the Dissemination and Commercialization of Spatial Databases: A North American -European Community

**Project Participants****Senior Personnel****Name:** Onsrud, Harlan**Worked for more than 160 Hours:** Yes**Contribution to Project:**

PhD adviser for the research and dissertation

**Post-doc****Graduate Student****Name:** Lopez, Xavier**Worked for more than 160 Hours:** Yes**Contribution to Project:****Undergraduate Student****Technician, Programmer****Other Participant****Research Experience for Undergraduates****Organizational Partners****Other Collaborators or Contacts****Activities and Findings****Research and Education Activities:**

The investigation examined how government information policies affect the transfer of spatial datasets to the scientific community and commercial information industry. National mapping agencies in Canada, France, Great Britain and United States were selected as the units for a comparative analysis. The study combined two formal research methods -- questionnaire survey and case study techniques. The research questions explored the impact of national policy priorities, intellectual property rights, and pricing practices on the acquisition and commercialization of spatial data.

**Findings:**

Three principle findings are as follows: 1) According to respondents,

nationally mandated policies are the primary determinant driving the cost-recovery practices being undertaken by those mapping agencies following such policies; 2) Responses indicated that academic end users and commercial intermediary users in Canada, France, and the UK face significant impediments in accessing mapping agency spatial data. For the commercial sector, the ability to commercialize spatial is perceived by potential users as impeded as well. In contrast, at the US Federal level, pricing, copyright and licensing were not identified by respondents as significant impediments; and 3) The study strongly evidenced that the imposition of intellectual property rights by government on public information was a key variable in determining access to and commercialization of national mapping agency datasets.

#### **Training and Development:**

The work resulted in the formal training of a PhD student in comparative research methodologies who went on to a Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellow at UC Berkeley prior to entering a research position in industry.

#### **Outreach Activities:**

Outreach to the public was through primarily the publication of two books.

#### **Journal Publications**

Lopez, Xavier R., and Mary Larsgaard, "Toward a California Geospatial Digital Library: A Strategy for Networked Knowledge", *Cartography and Geographic Information Systems*, p. 133, vol. 25(3), (1998). Published

Lopez, Xavier R., "New Developments in Intellectual Property Rights: Implications for Geographic Information Science", *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, p. 517, vol. 23(6), (1997). Published

Lopez, Xavier R., "Stimulating GIS Innovation Through the Dissemination of Geographic Information", *Journal of the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association*, p. 24, vol. 8(3), (1996). Published

#### **Books or Other One-time Publications**

Lopez, Xavier R., "The Dissemination of Spatial Data: A North American European Comparative Study on the Impact of Government Information Policy", (1998). Book, Published  
Bibliography: Norwood, NJ: Ablex

Lopez, Xavier R., "The Impact of Government Information Policy on the Dissemination of Spatial Data: A North American-European Comparative Study", (1996). Thesis, Published  
Bibliography: University of Maine

Hernon, Peter and Xavier R. Lopez, "Geographic Information Systems", (1996). Book, Published  
Editor(s): McClure, Charles, Peter Hernon, and Harold Relyea  
Collection: Federal Information Policies in the 1990's: Conflicts and Issues  
Bibliography: Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 233-257

Lopez, Xavier R, "Spatial Data as a Testbed for National Information Policy", (1997). Book, Published  
 Editor(s): M. Craglia and H. Couclelis  
 Collection: Geographic Information  
 Research: Bridging the Atlantic.  
 Bibliography: London: Taylor and Francis, 37-58

Onsrud, Harlan J. and Xavier R. Lopez, "Legal Issues in Disseminating Digital Geographic Data, Products, and Services: Conflicts and Commonalties Among European Union and United States Approaches", (1998). Book, Published  
 Editor(s): I. Masser and F. Salge  
 Collection: European Geographic Information Infrastructures: Opportunities and Pitfalls  
 Bibliography: London: Taylor and Francis, 153-167

#### Web/Internet Site

#### Other Specific Products

#### Contributions

##### **Contributions within Discipline:**

In addition to the refereed literature, methods and findings were communicated to the discipline through numerous conference presentations.

##### **Contributions to Other Disciplines:**

While the study focused on spatial data, the findings are relevant concerning access to scientific and technical data held by the government generally. Thus the study suggests areas of inquiry relative to experiences in additional scientific and technical data domains.

##### **Contributions to Human Resource Development:**

The work resulted in the formal training of a PhD student in research methodologies.

##### **Contributions to Resources for Research and Education:**

No substantial contributions to physical infrastructure developments or pedagogy.

##### **Contributions Beyond Science and Engineering:**

The work provides insights of benefit not only for the scientific and technical communities but also for the commercial marketplace.

#### Categories for which nothing is reported:

Organizational Partners  
 Any Web/Internet Site  
 Any Product