Esri International User Conference | **San Diego, CA**

Technical Workshops | **Thursday July 14, 2011**

What is Volunteered Geographic Information (VGI)?

Shawn Simpson

What is VGI?

- **Volunteered Geographic Information**
  - **Locational Crowdsourcing**
  - **Citizen volunteers contributing geographic data**

- **Examples**
  - **Wikimapia**
  - **OpenStreetMap**
  - **Crisis Mapping**
  - **Citizen Request Maps**

VGI | What's the big deal?

- **Can be a source of geographic data during crises and emergencies**

- **Can be a cost-effective source of geographic data**

- **Can be used as a source of geographic data because its timely**
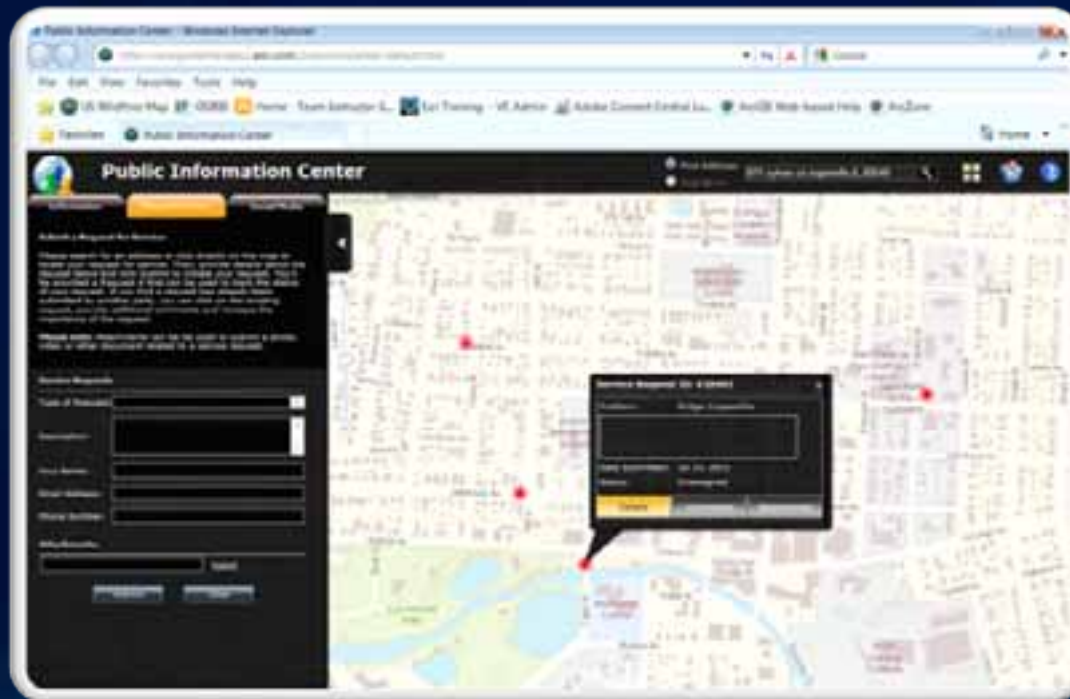
VGI | What's the big deal?

- **Can be a source of geographic data during crises and emergencies**
  - **Ushahidi**
  - **OpenStreetMap**
    - **OpenStreetMap - Project Haiti** (Video Clip)

Our community can be considered the "First, First Responders" – FEMA

"We have seven billion intelligent observers on the planet." – Michael F. Goodchild

VGI | What's the big deal?

- Can be a cost-effective source of geographic data
  - **Public Information Center**

VGI | What's the big deal?

- **Can be used as a source of geographic data because its timely**

  - **Think about the time it takes to create authoritative data**
  - **Think about how out-of-date authoritative data can be when it first hits the shelves**

  - **Now compare that to how immediate your need can be for current, geographic data**

VGI, Social Media, and Authoritative Content

- **VGI = Citizen volunteers contributing geographic data**

- **Social Media = Turning the public's conversation into geographic data**
  - **Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr**

- **Authoritative Content = Geographic data generated and maintained by GIS professionals**

…imagine the power of using them together…

VGI | Common concerns and questions

- **What about data accuracy?**
- **Can I trust it to be true, honest, and quality input?**
- **Can this method replace my existing workflow?**
- **Can it be trusted?**
- **Is this method dependable?**

VGI | Lessons Learned

- **What about data accuracy?**
  - **Linus's Law**
  - **Tobler's Law**
- **Can I trust it to be true, honest, and quality input?**
  - **Filtering mechanisms**
  - **Community Policing**
- **Can this method replace my existing workflow?**
- **Can it be trusted?**
- **Is this method dependable?**

VGI | Common concerns and questions

"The primary thing we take away from [this presentation] is that VGI [can] be helpful to those responding to disasters or even just looking for a cheap way to gather accurate data. … [VGI] can be especially useful if you can get the community involved in something they are passionate about, and leverage the increasing computing power they have in their homes, offices, or pockets."

- Archer, J. Lessons learned developing a Web map for volunteered geographic information (VGI) and social media. Retrieved from The ArcGIS Server Blog

Session evaluation
http://www.esri.com/sessionevals