

Worldwide (Status, Development and) Impact Assessment of Geoportals

Joep CROMPVOETS, Arnold BREGT, Floris de BREE, Pepijn van OORT, Bastiaan van LOENEN, The Netherlands, Abbas RAJABIFARD and Ian WILLIAMSON, Australia

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SUMMARY

At this moment, numerous (catalogue) geoportals have been established and it is expected that many more geoportals will be implemented in the future. To the best of our knowledge, not many status, development and impact assessment studies have been performed with regard to all these initiatives (certainly not on a worldwide scale). It is very important to know what the main developments and impacts of these facilities are to justify all costs, efforts and time to implement these geoportals and to improve their effectiveness and efficiency. For this reason, a survey was undertaken (November 2003 – April 2004) in order to assess the worldwide (status, developments and) impacts. The survey consisted of 21 questions and was sent to all known geoportal coordinators. In total 428 coordinators were contacted.

105 coordinators completed the survey. They were mainly coordinating international, national/federal and state geoportals in Europe, Australia and USA/Canada (only a few were coordinating Caribbean, African and Asian ones). The results were aggregated for the whole world.

The main results are that the implementation of geoportals is a global activity, that the use of geoportals and spatial data will increase, that more services will be provided and new services will be introduced within the next 5 years. As the main drawbacks for implementation are considered: institutional problems, lack of specialized data managers and data standardization. Moreover, it seems that geoportals (of the developed world) have a positive impact on society. These impacts are mainly economic in nature.