

The Willing Volunteer – Incorporating Voluntary Data into National Databases – Professor Muki Haklay

Abstract

Muki presented on the role of voluntary data into national databases where trends such as smartphones, education and healthy aging are enabling the citizen to be a source of information.

Volunteered Geographical Information and Citizen Science are creating ecosystems such as Open Street Map and iSpot where professional and amateurs can work together. The future will be a world of crowdsourced data working with data from professional bodies. Crowdsourcing requires different thinking about quality with information such as the number of people that edited the information to social gatekeepers or moderators determining the quality.

GFDRR (World Bank) have funded 79 case studies and compared success factors. With preliminary findings on inputs where successful projects were mainly new technology and direct investment; direct investment and training but without partners; or having multiple partners without training, new technology and direct investment. Preliminary findings with organisations showed that organisations are starting with secondary datasets and not using the crowd to update authority datasets directly.

- Examples such as OSM show the willingness of volunteers and the level of details that can be captured, however, information is not evenly spread and often tends to cluster.
- The process of on-boarding, motivating, guiding to collect data and managing the data gathering are key stages to gaining information
- Systems where amateurs and professionals can work together is becoming increasingly common
- Highly skilled trained operatives using expensive equipment working alongside volunteers using systems which are often cost neutral is key for the future
- Different thinking needs to be applied to data quality, the vast majority of users are not malicious
- Voluntary Data will extend data collection to new communities