An Alternate Career Choice for the Geography Major: Map, GIS, or Geographic Information Librarianship

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Overview of today’s talk

- Brief introduction to librarianship
- Map, GIS, Geographic Information Librarians
- Special projects in libraries
- How the geography (and related) degrees support this work
- Degree requirements for librarianship
- Collaboration is Win-Win
Librarianship You Ask?

- Libraries are changing
  - Transition to digital information
  - Increasing specialization and use of technology
  - Library user interacting differently with information

- Scholarship is changing
  - Electronic publications shorten time to publication
  - Copyright / fair use
  - Collaborative learning
  - Smaller units of information and data
Librarian

- Main work categories:
  - Up front (reference desk, instruction)
  - Behind the scenes (cataloging, database licensing, journal subscriptions)
  - Managers (planning, budgeting, supervising)
- Great deal of specialization, particularly in university or corporate library setting
- Job growth, increasing IT emphasis
- Starting salary in universities—$40,000+
Map Librarianship

- Specialization took hold after WWII – rise of map collections in libraries
- Collect - maps, atlases, and aerial photos
- Instruction and user support
- Organize and preserve collection
- Create bibliographies, web guides
- Recently → Scanning and web exhibits
GIS Librarianship

- Growth of GIS in libraries over 15 years
  - 1992 - Association of Research Libraries & ESRI partner for GIS Literacy Project
  - 1999, 60% of libraries surveyed provide some GIS services
  - 2005, all libraries surveyed provide GIS services

- GIS services vary – **most** assist in finding and collecting data; **some** give training, digitize or create maps; **few** handle campus site license and have dedicated GIS computer labs in libraries
Geographic Information Librarianship

- Recently formed by merging, overlap of print Map and GIS Librarianship duties
- Spans both print and digital worlds
  - Taking cartographic information in the form it comes in, often converting from one to the other
- Follows evolution of print to digital format for many key sources and growth of geospatial data in libraries and on web
  - Census → American Factfinder
  - National Atlas (was print now is on internet)
Map and GIS Projects in Libraries

- Build geodatabase and clearinghouses of locally held GIS data
- Map-based search interfaces
  - Yahoo!Map and Google Earth
- Digitizing maps – put on webpage or in digital library
  - Portal to Texas History (UNT)
  - Perry Castenada Library web page (UT)
- ArcIMS used to present GIS dataset (A&M)
- GIS lab & help desk in library (UT-Arlington)
Reconnaissance soil survey of the panhandle region of Texas
Date: 1911-10-26
Creator: Carter, William T. (William Thomas)
Description: Soil survey of 26 counties in the panhandle region of Texas. Included are Armstrong, Briscoe, Carson, Castro, Childress, Collingsworth, Dallam, Deaf Smith, Donley, Gray, Hall, Hays, Hartley, Hemphill, Hutchinson, Lipscomb, Moore, Ochiltree, Oldham, Parmer, Potter, Randall, Roberts, Sherman, Swisher, and Wheeler counties. Text describes the area, climate, soils, agriculture, and irrigation of these counties.
> more info

Soil map, Bee County, Texas
Date: 1938-10
Description: Map displays soil types along with creeks, towns, schools, churches, power transmission lines, oil and gas pipelines, roads, and railroads. Includes legend and symbols.
> more info

Soil map, Brown County, Texas
Date: 1948-03
Description: Map displays soil types along with bayous, lakes, rivers, agricultural field stations, refineries, pipelines, power transmission lines, towns, churches, country clubs, roads, and railroads. Includes legend and symbols. Separate, supplemental chart shows principle characteristics of each soil type. A polyconic projection, North American datum. "Horizontal control by U.S. G. S. and U. S. C. and G. S. 100000 foot grid based upon Texas (Central) system of plane coordinates." With supplemental soil chart, 36 x 35 cm.
ArcIMS presentation of Dataset
YahooMap Interface to Geologic Atlas of the United States
Gallery Display

One volume of Geologic Atlas of the United States with gallery display in Institutional Repository
Geographic Knowledge in Action

- Geographic concepts are put to use when:
  - Teaching library users how to read a map
    - coordinates, grids, legend, scale, revisions
  - Locating places from coordinates or grids
  - Purchasing maps
  - Creating catalog or metadata records
  - Doing any type of GIS work
  - Knowing how maps are used!
Degree Requirements

- BA/BS in any subject, with Geography, Environmental Sciences or related degree preferred for map or GIS positions
- Master’s degree from American Library Association Accredited program of Library or Information Science
  - Many have distance education courses and some have completely online degrees
Who Should Consider Map & GIS Librarianship?

- Those interested in a service profession and academic or research environment
- Those who want to use their degree and enjoy the variety of teaching, collaboration, use of general technology and GIS, and enjoy the mix of historical and high tech
- Try it out – Take a job as part time student assistant or full time staff member
How Geography Department can support this Specialization

- Build interdisciplinary collaboration between Geography & Library/Info Programs
- Cross list and team teach courses
  - Metadata, Database & Geodatabase design
- Build a specialized Curriculum–
  - Dual Master’s degree
  - Library/Information Science Certificate requiring Geography / GIS courses
Summary

- Jobs are available – Libraries are hiring!
- Employees with knowledge of geography support rapidly expanding map and GIS services and collections in libraries.
- Further information
  - American Library Association (www.ala.org)
  - Association for Library & Information Science Education (www.alise.org)
  - Special Libraries Association (www.sla.org)
Thank You!

- Questions?

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