

Summer Institute in Geographic Information, Berlin 1996

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The GISDATA initiative of the European Science Foundation and the National Center for Geographic Information Analysis of the National Science Foundation from USA organized a Summer Institute in Geographic Information which took place in Villa Borsig, Berlin, Germany, from July 24 to August 1, 1996. This Summer Institute brought together 32 'early career scientists' (at the Ph.D. level) and 14 senior researchers from the field of Geographic Information Science from all over Europe and USA. The young scientists were scholars, selected according to the review of their submitted contributions. They spent eight days working together. In numerous discussions the participants exchanged their experience. This was especially valuable for the young scholars as they received feedback on their work. Another aspect was to become acquainted with both the living legends of GIS research, and with young scientists of similar interests.

The program consisted of keynote speeches and workshops given by the senior researchers, and papers given by the young scholars. Keynotes gave an overview and summary of actual research directions in geographic information science. The range of topics covered: (i) *philosophical, societal* and aspects of *ethics* and *law*, and the role of GIS in decision making processes; (ii) *conceptual aspects*: quality, modeling space and time; (iii) *application areas*, like global change, health, urban planing and remote sensing. Workshops focused on the use of research results in industry, geoinformation resources on the Web and how to publish in academia. The papers presented by the young scholars reflect their specific research interests. Topics are wide spread covering (i) cultural, economical and conceptual aspects of GIS; (ii) quality assessment, spatial analysis and spatial reasoning; (iii) visualization, user interface design, use of remote sensing for modeling and analysis for GIS. These papers were presented in three parallel sessions, and the chairmen were requested to give an overview of each session during a daily 'happy hour'.

The second part of the Summer Institute was dominated by a competition in writing (hypothetical) research proposals. Each of six groups submitted a proposal to the review committee and gave an oral presentation to the plenum. Writing a research proposal from the scratch was a valuable experience for young scholars for various reasons. Scholars experienced team work in an interdisciplinary and international environment. Senior researchers, attached to each group, advised how to manage a project and how to set up a proposal. Scholars' inputs were creative ideas, concepts, methods and tools. They gave their vision about future research directions, and some nights were spent in front of computers.

Villa Borsig, in a park at lake Tegel, provided a pleasant working environment and supported the social part of the Summer Institute. Social events helped to accomplish all the tasks of the Summer Institute successfully. Field trips like a boat tour through Berlin, visit to Potsdam and Berlin provided pleasant breaks. But the highlight of the Summer Institute was the award of the group with the best proposal. The overall celebration of this great event ended with a barbecue in the Villa Borsig's garden.

Organizers did their best to make the stay of participants as pleasant as possible. Thanks primarily to Massimo Craglia from GISDATA, Harlan Onsrud from NCGIA, and the local organizing staff! Proceedings of both Institutes will be published by Taylor & Francis. Detailed information on GISDATA activity including this Summer Institute can be found at the URL <http://www.shef.ac.uk/uni/academic/D-H/gis/gisdata.html>.

This Summer Institute was the second of its kind, after the one held in Wolfe's Neck, Maine, USA. Unfortunately, this event was already the last, because of the termination of the GISDATA initiative.