



Cartographic Perspectives

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From the President

Dear NACIS Members,

I write this at a time of economic uncertainty. Here at Brigham Young University, we have a hiring freeze, and much of our auxiliary budget (travel, student assistants, etc.) is being cut. We recently lost our university map librarian, and the library is considering filling his slot with something different. Funding for my research is harder to come by. My students are worried about their job prospects. In my freelance work at home (Kinesava Geographics), long-time clients are unsure of their own viability and whether they can continue to afford my services.

It is easy to feel that Cartography is headed toward a perfect storm. Economic cutbacks come at a time when the exponentially increasing popularity of mapping as a tool (or a toy) paradoxically seems to threaten mapping as a craft. Will our clients, our employers, our funding sources, or our students' employers soon see us as an expendable luxury that can be easily replaced by free maps off the Internet?

I see two possible courses we can take to navigate this storm. The reactionary approach would be to fight to protect our turf from the "amateur cartographers," using legislative and other means to try to kill neogeography. While some professions, such as surveying and engineering, have been very successful at this "fortress

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