

## LETTER FROM THE GUEST EDITOR

Dear Map Enthusiasts,

First, I would like to welcome all newcomers to *Cartographic Perspectives* (*CP*), thank you for joining us for this special digital issue, and we invite you to learn more about the North American Cartographic Information Society (NACIS) at [nacis.org](http://nacis.org). Second, I'd like to welcome old friends to this new presentation of *CP*. We hope that you will participate in our discussion after exploring the following pages in this new format... and please, don't be shy, we'd like to hear your thoughts.

Since 1989, when the first issue of *CP* was published, the journal has played an integral role in supporting the society's mission. However, in addition to rising production costs, a traditional printed academic journal offers limited distribution to only our members, subscribers, and library patrons. Last spring, we began discussing the possibilities of *CP* as an open source journal. After much talk and wonderment about how the NACIS community would feel about drastically altering the format of the journal, first to digital production, then the possibility of making it open source, we decided to test it, to see what a different format of *CP* might look like. Support for these ideas was reflected in the recent readership survey's results (published in *CP* 63) — the clearest takeaway being that now is a great time for change.

This is a beginning, a starting point. Our colleagues were invited to participate in this special digital issue of *CP* and we were pleasantly surprised by their enthusiasm and support of this issue, and what they were willing to share. Not only have they given all of the NACIS membership a great gift—but in the true spirit of mapgiving, these gifts will be given to the world, freely available via the Web.

A project to give things away, in the hopes of supporting our field, and offering it for free to the entire world? What a great mapgiving project. A few months later, here we are.

The following pages contain excellent contributions in a spiffy new layout. As you work your way through the content you will notice a common theme of openness, sharing—ultimately of building. This can only serve to strengthen our field and educate potential clients, organizations, and the general public about the power of representing spatial data through great maps. David DiBiase offers his recent work in the Open Educational Resources Movement and reasons to support it.

You will find several contributors who have followed through with providing Open Education Resources, Rob E. Roth and Kevin S. Ross offer a tutorial, complete with datasets and code—an entire code library, with a challenge to you to add to it. Mark Harrower and co-authors offer Cartography 2.0, a FREE online textbook for teaching interactive maps. Nathaniel Vaughn Kelso and Tom Patterson describe Natural Earth Vector a free set of data which makes any cartographer’s jaw drop, because of the thought, detail and time that they are giving...*yes, GIVING away*. Charlie Frye offers his experience and challenges all of us to be thinking about how to help others understand the importance of the role of a cartographer. Finally, Bill Buckingham and Samuel Dennis describe work that they are doing where the role of the cartographer is as a guide to allow a non-map expert, in their case community members to make their own maps, where the cartographic decisions have been made by the cartographer. We hope you will be able to put the content of this issue to use in your classroom, your lab or your production shop.

There were many challenges associated with pulling off this special digital issue, most critically: *time*. From the moment of “cold calling” contributors, to presenting it to you here at the, 2009 NACIS business meeting in Sacramento, we had four months. This left us with a list of things we would have like to include in future digital issues. For instance, interactive word clouds—which we have used in the place of abstracts, more interactive maps, generally taking advantage of the digital format further. However, in another sense, the compressed time frame turns out to be an amazing benefit—in a world where our field is changing so drastically, so quickly—a fast turnaround is critical. Other benefits to a digital issue include: interactive content, color within the article at no additional cost, flexibility to update or easily try new things, exposure for NACIS that goes beyond our membership, no printing costs—which are projected to exceed the revenue generated through the collection of our society’s membership dues.

This issue would not have been possible without the help of many people. First, I’d like to extend a big thank you to each of the contributors, who have donated their time to share this information with us. A special thank you to NACIS, Fritz Kessler, Editor of *CP*, in particular for his guidance and support in completing this experiment. Lastly, I would like to express my appreciation, to the University of Wisconsin—Madison Geography Department for supporting me in this process.

I cannot encourage you strongly enough, to discuss the possibilities of sharing *CP* openly, digitally. Share with us, how this format can enhance the presentation of your work, what additional features would you like to see, what would you change, in addition to any concerns you have. We encourage you to collaborate with us, your colleagues, and map enthusiasts—novice or expert—in putting better maps into the world.

As always the most critical factor in the success of a journal are quality submissions. Please assemble your thoughts and work into words to share it with us in *CP*.

Thank you for reading,

Tanya Buckingham