

Inuit Knowledge and Geospatial Ontologies in Nunatsiavut

Summary

Project Leader(s)

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In a context of changing Arctic natural, social, political and economic environments, it is argued that there is an urgent need to document and share the extensive and valuable knowledge held by Elders and other experts with local decision makers (making decisions to protect and dictate wise use of land and sea resources today), younger generations (those having to make such decisions and live in relationship with this environment into the future) as well as with members of the scientific community trying better to understand pressures on these systems. However, it is critical that this information is represented and communicated in a way that is true to its original cultural and traditional conceptualization and thinking rather than simply 'fitting' it (IK) into existing scientific frameworks of seeing a particular phenomenon. This project proposes to conduct a PGIS and geospatial ontology research exercise with expert knowledge holders in the Nunatsiavut Settlement Area. The goal is the development of a geo-spatial ontology application and interface (newly conceptualized land classification system with GIS representation) that complements existing GIS for use in land use planning, environment and development decision making as well as Inuit Knowledge (Nunatsiavut) representation and transmission in Nunatsiavut. It is argued that the product(s) of this project have the potential to be more culturally appropriate and representative of Nunatsiavimmiut Knowledge and views of the land and environment around them than 'traditional' scientific representations. Additionally, through this IK research project it is expected that new insights will be gained that are of direct interest and value to scientific research on the topics of environmental change in Arctic ecosystems (ie. new insights into elements of change that may support the formation of new hypotheses for research or explain currently unexplained aspects of datasets).

People

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Publications

Non-Refereed Contributions

Furgal, C., Sheldon, T., Pulsifer, P., Devillers, R. Wilkes, J., Denniston, M. and Nickels, S., 2010, Inuit Knowledge and Geospatial Ontology: Inuit classifications of lands and resources in Nunatsiavut, ArcticNet Annual Science Meeting, 1, Published