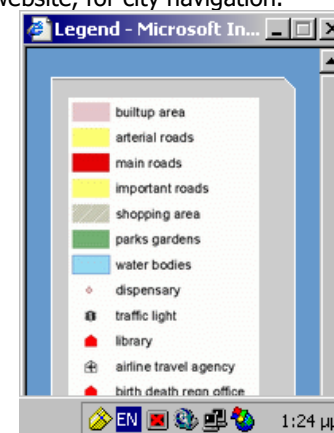


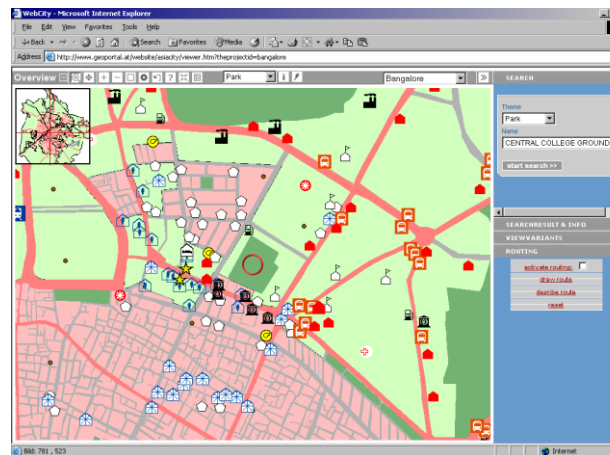
Acronym : ASIA_CITY No.Project:ASI/B7-301/97/0126-14								
Project Title: "ASIA_CITY": ON-LINE NAVIGATIONAL CITY INFORMATION								
Name of legal entity	Country	Project value [Million €]	% carried out by EPSILON	No. of staff provided	Name of Client	Origin of Funding	Dates [start/end]	Name of partners
EPSILON	GREECE	3,6	48%	20	EU	EU	NOV2003 31/06/2005	See foot note ¹⁾
Project Description							Type of Services Provided [Outlined]	
Objective The success of tourism depends on the ability of the country to sufficiently develop, manage and market the tourism facilities and activities. Therefore, a <i>country tourism strategy plan</i> is required, which will lead to a strong tourism industry. Tourism is an information-sensitive industry, in which <i>information technology</i> plays a key role in planning. Internet technologies, electronic commerce and WebGIS are already playing a significant role. The tourist can retrieve map-based information on the web or at info-kiosks and with a click of a mouse, navigate into foreign destinations and have real-time access to textual and visual information of places all around the world (e.g. for researching a country, booking flight/hotel, planning a route, or gathering travel details). As a constantly increasing number of destinations are promoted via the Internet and map-based information, it becomes evident that both the way the information is presented and retrieved has a great impact on the tourist's decision in selecting a destination. The ASIA_CITY project supplies a platform for the local-regional tourism authorities in Asia aimed to develop-enhance their tourism plans by presenting a commonly accepted plan -a <i>Joint Strategy</i>- in the IST technology field of "on-line navigational city information". The Joint Strategy includes a <i>Study</i> to be used as a reference tool by tourism planners and decision makers for understating the complex issues of Geographic Information (infrastructure, databases, legal framework etc) and a <i>web-based application</i> to incorporate in their official website, for city navigation. Results The <u>first step</u> of the project was to set the project requirements for designing the web-based application and to locate and retrieve the relevant geographic databases for the seven participating Asian cities, Karachi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, Katmandu, Hanoi and Bandar Seri Begawan. The <u>second step</u> was to record the Geographic Information (GI) data policies existing in the European Union, United States, Australia, and selective Asian countries (Pakistan India, Nepal, Vietnam and Brunei). The in depth and time consuming effort revealed some interesting results. USA and Australia are considered the leading forces in the Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) development, with good online documentation and geo-portals, and therefore a good example of operational SDIs. On the other hand, for most of the Asian countries there is very little information available about their SDIs. Such information is limited in content and not very up to date. The access to that material through the web is also limited. Although several projects are underway in a regional level, there is still lack of awareness of regional SDI benefits, of understanding of the complexity of such issues and incompatibilities with perceived needs of different nations. The situation on spatial information in European Union is somewhere in the middle. Although many EU countries have set up their own National SDIs, the situation in Europe is one of fragmentation of datasets and sources, gaps in data availability, lack of harmonization between datasets at different geographical scales and duplication of information collection. Several major EU Initiatives are underway (INSPIRE, GMES etc) in order to create a European SDI.							<u>Program nature:</u> R&D_Liaise with European IT&C initiatives & programmes <u>The approach</u> The approach adopted by the ASIA_CITY group for diffusing the outcomes of the <i>Joint Strategy</i> was to identify the local target audience and connect with Government agencies including the Tourism, Survey, IT departments & municipalities. Key point of all operations was to create awareness and initiate a dialogue of the issues involved, the expected results and the benefits to the organizations. The feedback of these interactions was surprisingly positive, considering the fact that GIS technology in the tourism industry in developing countries is relatively new and government bodies are "technology shy".	



The third step of the project was the creation of the ASIA_CITY software application. *WebAsiaCity* is a Web-GIS application with a focus on the digital online-city maps based on Windows Active Server Pages (ASP) and ESRI ArcIMS. Part of the functionality of WebAsiaCity is the switching between different projects (=cities) as well as different view-variants of a map (city map, air photograph, tourist map). The *WebAsiaCity* is delivered with a standard HTML template that can be modified for individual adoptions of the layout. With the assistance of the WebSuite Author (a comfortable server sided configuration of the WebGIS application in the form of projects) is possible to customize WebAsiaCity to the individual needs and requirements of the users.

Conclusions

In conclusion, GIS can play a crucial role in developing and implementing a tourism plan. However, before the local/national governments launch into the new technologies full speed, it is important to understand all the complex issues involved. An efficient tourism strategy plan can create a strong tourism industry, capable of delivering a high quality experience for the visitor to the region and providing sustainable economic and community benefits for the residents.



Key Words

Cluster analysis, directives, economics, environment, epsilon, Europe, Eurostat, GIS, indexing, indicator, modelling, neural network, NUTS, policy, Statistics, and Sustainability.

For Information

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