

Ramona GIS Inventory System

NSGIC is proud to announce that the Ramona GIS Inventory System is available for public use beginning on February 20, 2006. Development of Ramona was completed last fall using grant funds from NOAA. It underwent beta testing with thirteen states through December 2005, and their suggested changes have been incorporated into the system.

Ramona was developed to inventory the GIS data holdings of tribal, state and local governments, and their partners. It provides one consistent platform for the nation that is designed to work in concert with the Geospatial One Stop (GOS) Portal, but it can also be customized for use by each state.

Ramona allows its users to create their own profile, including information on their organization, systems, and data distribution and management policies. Creation of this profile takes between 15 and 30 minutes and can be done in multiple sessions. The system also provides a quick way to inventory individual data layers that only takes between 30 seconds and 2 minutes per layer.

Through various survey efforts, NSGIC estimates that 75% of state and local government agencies do not document their data holdings in a nationally consistent manner using the Federal Geographic Data Committee's (FGDC) Metadata Standard. Ramona automatically creates a very basic meta-

data form with enough information to support "data discovery." The user can choose to send these forms to the GOS Portal.

Using Ramona will help state, local and tribal government agencies reduce the number of data inventory requests made by federal agencies. For example the Census Bureau routinely contacts agencies to obtain information for the TIGER Enhancement Database and the Federal Emergency Management Agency inventories all available data when it begins to update Flood Maps in each jurisdiction. By entering the information for your organization, at your own pace, you can reduce the complexity and frequency of these contacts and manage your time more effectively. Ramona

will also be useful when government agencies are responding to emergencies. Your information will be readily available to other agencies and will reduce their need contact you. This will help to speed-up services to your citizens.

New reports and other features will be added to support state-wide business planning activities. This will ensure that your information is available to potential partners as they develop budgets and plan for future data production. The existing management reports can give us a much better understanding of national status, trends, and needs. Ramona is a functional tool and not just a collection of information.

Ramona's home page is shown above. It can be customized for each state or federal agency user of the system. Ramona was created under grant NA04NOS4730011 from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration at the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Frequently Asked Questions

Did you know?

- The Department of Homeland Security references Ramona in Appendix H of the FY 2006 Homeland Security Grant Program Guidance and Application Kit.
- All users of Ramona can locate data custodians by using the "I" icon on the status map.
- Using Ramona, may increase your chances of obtaining partnership funding or being selected for mapping projects such as the Flood Map Modernization program.
- During emergencies, first responders can use Ramona to locate the information they need.

For questions, please contact Bill Burgess
at william.burgess@comcast.net or
Jill Saligoe-Simmel at jsaligoe@iupui.edu

1) What is the URL to Access Ramona?

Each state has a URL that uses the following naming convention where the two letter state code for each state is inserted in the URL (see example below for Indiana).

<http://www.in.gisinventory.net>

2) How can I create an account?

New users must create an account in order to be registered. Click "Create an Account" or "My Profile" to create a new account. Fill-in the required information. Registered users will be prompted to login. Your login name is your email address. If your email address changes, you are responsible for logging-in under your old email address and updating your log-in information under the User Profile section.

3) Is Ramona a Metadata tool?

NO - Ramona is designed to inventory GIS users and organizations along with information on their policies, systems and data, so that we can obtain valuable management information that will aid in the design of better statewide and national coordination programs. The main purpose of Ramona is to support statewide GIS coordination councils and to provide them with the information they need to form and sustain better partnerships. As an added benefit, you can control the export of the very basic metadata forms (not fully FGDC-compliant) that Ramona creates for "data discovery" purposes and send them to the GOS Portal. As noted on the front page, approxi-

mately 75% of state and local governments do not create FGDC-compliant metadata. Ramona will help to "jumpstart" metadata production and encourage all data stewards and custodians to participate in documenting their data holdings. **PLEASE NOTE:** Harvesting by the GOS Portal will not begin until additional protocols are established. We anticipate harvesting by April 2006.

4) Who should register in Ramona and complete a profile?

Ramona was designed for the individual custodians or stewards that actually create geospatial data products, so that they can inventory their own data holdings. NSGIC is encouraging statewide GIS coordination councils to support the system and its use by these individuals. We know that in some states, the state clearinghouses represent individual data-producing agencies and in other situations, some local governments with GIS data do not have Internet access. In these situations, the statewide GIS coordination councils are able to establish their own procedures regarding "who" will document available data holdings. Please keep in mind that Ramona will be most valuable when the original data producers document their own data. It is important that only one agency document a single data layer. This prevents duplicate records and confusion when people search systems like the National Clearinghouse or the GOS Portal.

5) If I already create Metadata, do I need to

enter my information in Ramona?

YES - At this time, it is not possible to import existing metadata records into Ramona. The reason is that in order to make Ramona simple and quick to use, it employs "drop down" and "pick" lists for many questions. Since the existing metadata standard allows free text answers to most questions, they can not be imported into Ramona without extensive hand editing. We recognize that this is an inconvenience, but it really takes very little time to create a profile and document all of your data holdings in Ramona. The potential benefits that will come from using the system easily offset this extra time.

6) Why can I only select "approximate" answers instead of filling in precise information?

In order for Ramona to be useful as a national tool, we have to compare "apples to apples," and we couldn't do that if all users were entering unique answers. We are also trying to ensure a high quality database through the use of standardized answers. For example, the map scale 1:1,200 is commonly written by different users as 1:1200, 1200 scale, 100 scale, one inch = 100 feet, one inch = 100', and 1" = 100', with almost limitless options. We simply can't maintain a high quality database and reporting system if we allow free text answers to such questions. Instead, we are asking you to select from the approximate answers that are offered, because that is the type of information that we need to promote better information sharing.

National States Geographic Information Council

2105 Laurel Bush Road
Bel Air, Maryland 21015
443-640-1075 x110
443-640-1031 FAX
Fred@ksgroup.org
<http://www.nsgic.org>



ABOUT NSGIC — The National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC) is an organization of States committed to efficient and effective government through the prudent adoption of geospatial information technologies. Members of NSGIC include delegations of state GIS coordinators and senior state GIS managers from across the United States. Other members include representatives from Federal agencies, local government, the private sector, academia and other professional organizations. A rich and diverse group, the NSGIC membership includes nationally and internationally recognized experts in GIS, geospatial data production and management, and information technology policy.