

Interim Progress Report

**Managing Spatial Information on ACS Campuses**

(original proposal at <http://home.wlu.edu/~blackmerh/sabb/acs21xi.html>)

Hugh Blackmer  
Science Librarian  
Washington & Lee University

The funds were intended to support travel to explore the current state of GIS interest and development on ACS campuses. In late March Skip Williams and I visited Sewanee, Furman and Davidson to gauge the prospects for a collaboration to build a central repository for spatial data and GIS support materials. We met with teaching faculty, Instructional Technology personnel, and library representatives at all three campuses, and found the overall level of interest to be quite high, but concluded that a specific collaboration we had been considering (with Jon Evans' Landscape Analysis Lab at Sewanee) for prototype development was impractical, due to the pressures of contract work in the Lab. We subsequently met with Pat Schoknecht of University of Richmond (who has funding to develop support for GIS with a community outreach component), and (in cooperation with John Blackburn and Mark Rush at Washington & Lee) developed a proposal for Information Fluency funding, to design and build a prototype of The Digital South, a digital library of GIS data (the final draft of the now-funded proposal is at <http://home.wlu.edu/~blackmerh/digisouth/digitalsouthDRAFT12.html>).

This project involves further work with ESRI's Internet Map Server (ArcIMS) as the means to deliver spatial data, and links as well with database projects we have underway (see <http://amazon.wlu.edu/amazon/> for one of these, a personal digital library and collaborative environment which will eventually be connected with The Digital South, and <http://ims1.wlu.edu> for the continuing experiments with ArcIMS).

I will be on sabbatical during the fall term of 2002, visiting liberal arts colleges in New England to explore a range of digital library and instructional technology issues (including GIS –see <http://home.wlu.edu/~blackmerh/sabb/necolleges.html> for details), at the end of which Skip will meet me at the Center for Educational Technology at Middlebury, for discussions on other consortial approaches to GIS support and deployment. After my return to Washington & Lee Skip and I plan to use the remaining travel funds to make a trip to Centre and Rhodes to continue the exploration of ACS efforts to develop support GIS. The final report will be submitted in Winter 2003.

In short, the opportunity to travel to other campuses has been very fruitful in broadening our appreciation of the range of difficulties in building a common resource, and in helping us develop a network of potential colleagues on several other ACS campuses. The Digital South prototype represents an interim solution to many of the problems first enunciated in the University of Richmond meeting in November 2001, and we intend to continue to develop the interlinkage among GIS and database applications.