



ESRI Canada's Geography Network

Builds on GeoBase

ESRI Canada is a Canadian owned company specializing in geographic information system (GIS) solutions. ESRI Canada provides solutions for many industries including local government, utilities, public safety and defence, business demographics, education, natural resources, and transportation. ESRI Canada's user community consists of over 8,000 Canadian organizations, an extensive business partner network of more than 100 Canadian organizations, and over 3,000 schools that use GIS as part of their curriculum.

Data is the foundation of any GIS. Duplication of effort in collecting and maintaining this data adds unnecessary costs to any project or application. In support of the GeoBase concept of collecting quality data once and making it available for use by many, ESRI Canada is making GeoBase data available on its Geography Network Canada portal (geographynetwork.ca). GeoBase data comes at no cost to the user and has no restrictions on redistribution. This means that developers and GIS users are free to redistribute products containing GeoBase data without cost or licensing issues.

The Geography Network Canada portal is a community-based portal of online resources for finding and sharing geographic content including live maps and data. The availability of GeoBase data on the Geography Network Canada portal will have significant impact by providing immediately usable data as web services for ESRI Canada's installed base of over 50,000 users. GeoBase provides a foundation of quality geospatial framework data to which users can add other thematic data. This allows users to build effective applications while avoiding wasteful duplication of effort in collecting and maintaining these base

layers themselves. And the GeoBase data comes at no cost to the user. Organizations can focus on their core business, collecting only the data that is specific to their application and business.

Beyond live web services, the GeoBase layers on the Geography Network portal will soon be available to users for direct data download in a variety of vector formats. Users will have the ability to navigate to a variety of geographic areas, select from an extensive list of vector data formats including geographic markup language (GML), computer aided design (CAD), shapefiles, and others. Within a few seconds, users will be able to download their personalized dataset to their local machine for further analysis.

ESRI Canada has been very active in promoting geography and geomatics in education. As part of the K-12 program, which has helped get GIS technology into thousands of schools in Canada, ESRI Canada has produced a comprehensive collection of GIS ready data and supporting lesson plans called ArcCanada. Future releases of ArcCanada, already underway, will incorporate the wealth of data available in GeoBase. Teachers will be able to provide meaningful exercises by integrating data from their local area when using GIS to teach geography. GIS is a mandatory component for Grade 9 students in Ontario and is part of the curriculum in many other provinces in subjects such as environmental studies and history.

GeoBase is a current, accurate, and maintained set of base geospatial data that describes Canada. Operating under the banner of the Canadian Council on Geomatics (CCOG), federal, provincial, and territorial governments are working together to make GeoBase possible by offering source data for the creation of the GeoBase themes.