

Self financing mapping and cadastral agencies, data services and INSPIRE – Is there a conflict?

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Abstract:

By tradition, the role of National Mapping and Cadastral Agencies (NMCA's) is to provide the society with accurate topographic maps and information about the real estate cadastre in the country. These activities are supported by the national governments by a varying degree. There is a tendency among NMCA's to strive for increased degree of self financing, where users pay for the services being provided. Being reliant on a single source of funding is often considered to be a risk, even if it is governmental funding. The development of National Spatial Data Infrastructures (NSDI's) takes another path. In connection with the implementation of INSPIRE, an increasing number of data providers are providing their data free of charge through standardized web services. The success of commercial alternatives from companies like Google and Microsoft has probably contributed to this development. In addition, there is a political will to increase the amount of public sector information made available for free to the citizens. The network services as specified in the INSPIRE directive should be seen as generic services, being components of an infrastructure. On the other hand, many NMCA's are also providing web applications free of charge to the citizens, where user's can access information about their property, old historical maps etc. These three developments (increased degree of self financing, increased number of free network services and increased number of free web applications) seems to contradict each other. However, that doesn't have to be the case. The objective of this paper is to present experiences from two different countries (Sweden and Macedonia) where these three developments are ongoing without major conflicts. Business models for sharing costs and income are reviewed as well as business models for the supply of strategic information.

Keywords: self financing, INSPIRE, business models