

Fundamentals of GIS: Workshop 12 Data Modeling Safari.

Old Business: Q/A on Proposals & General Modeling Ideas

New Business: The Draft Models Assignment.

Today's Topics: Practical Geography and Survival:

Looking over your proposals over the last couple of weeks has reminded me of some of the fundamental questions of geography.

- How can an organism, organization, species or ecosystem survive most comfortably on this planet?
- How do individual organisms, organizations, species and ecosystems survive and succeed on this planet in the past and at the present time and in the future?
- What is changing? Are there threats and opportunities emerging in the landscape that may impact on our level of comfort?
- Is there any way that we can work with other individuals and organizations to collect, organize, share and re-use information that would be **useful** in this essential endeavor of survival or success?

Given the importance of these questions, it is essential that we are able to answer the usefulness question. If we are serious about these explorations, then we need to have a critical mindset concerning utility. Only by being careful to fit and evaluate data to actual concerns are we able to understand if a model works well, and how it could work better.



If you aren't taking this critical attitude, then it is likely that you are wasting your time and the time of your clients. This is what people do when they are simply exploring the technical side of GIS, without considering actual applications in essential geography.

I suggest adopting a [Method Acting](#) approach. Imagine that you are an organism that actually cares about finding a comfortable home. Or a greedy organization that is actually concerned to choose the right location for a facility. Or a threatened species that is concerned with safety for its children. You should communicate as if and are concerned that your findings and assessment of utility is credible in the eyes of other people who understand the critical aspects of data and representation.

Today we will look at a couple of interesting agricultural data models.

Sunflower: An adventure with data from the US Department of Agriculture.

www.gismanual.com/sunflower/sunflower.zip.

Pilgrim Pueblos: a 21st century approach to survival in New England. www.gismanual.com/earthshelter