GPS Policy in India: The implications

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Abstract

The fast moving technology generally left policy practitioners fumble in formulating their responses. The country like India on one hand marches ahead with the pace of technology at the same time the country also faces the policy that may be considered by many not conducive for the growth of the technology. The paper will detail the existing policy scenario the new mapping policy, the efforts regarding NSDI and the policies pertaining to GPS. The paper will attempt to assess the implications of the same on the growth of geomatics technology.

Key words: GPS, Policy, NSDI

The GIS Environment is changing. More that the environment it has changed the way we function. Last decade has witnessed the major technological revolution and our struggle is to evolve ourselves to maintain the pace with technology. The geomatcis community is also under the phase of transition.

The term digital is in vogue. The same is true for surveying, mapping and cartography too. In an era of 'digital' we are also need to be more and more digital, if not for any thing else, but for our own survival.

I would like to highlight four very important developments that occurred in the field of geomatics in India. That's going to have long-term implications and impacts. They are

- National Map Policy
- NSDI
- Cartosat
- Google Earth

Let me elaborate one by one. The National Map Policy in India is land mark and unique both. Landmark because it is for the first time a Map Policy per se came to existence. Earlier we had scattered information here and there, but, it is for the first time we have a document that is known a New Map Policy. Unique because it has endeavoured to address the developmental needs without compromising the security aspects. The concept of Open Series Maps (OSM) and Defence Series Maps (DSM) are very innovative and progressive.

The recently released resolution on The National Spatial Development Infrastructure (NSDI) is in a very important step forward. It is a commitment on the part of Government of India to share the spatial information with the larger community to address the over all needs of development. Understanding of spatial data as a resource, and accordingly their utilizations is very important.

The other development Cartosat has created another revolution in data capturing. In fact the advent of high resolution imageries and their implication we are already noticing when some private agencies started selling high resolution imageries all across the world. These developments have changed the way we looked at remote sensing images. These are going to fasten the entire process of data capturing at large scale.

One more development to be highlighted is Google Earth. This initiative might have created certain controversies but no one can deny that it has managed the larger community participation on going debate of spatial data and its availability. Interestingly, it will take the debate on different domain and will force the policy makers to have a re-look how to deal with many issue related to security.

In India, for GPS there had been the need of three licenses. The first one was import license which is no more in existence. In year 2004, this requirement has been removed. The second license is the operating license, which exists as a rule but practically not in practice. The third license is the frequency license and this license is must.