

Keynote Speech

Dr. Trevor M. Harris

Dr. Harris is Eberly Distinguished Professor of Geography and Department Chairperson of Geology and Geography at the West Virginia University. Dr. Harris received his BA degree in Geography and history and Ph.D. in Geography from the Hull University. His research interests include geographic information science, GIS and society, critical GIS, participatory GIS, humanities GIS, spatial humanities, virtual GIS, virtual reality, augmented reality, exploratory spatial data analysis, GIS and archaeology and environmental impact assessment. Dr. Harris serves on the editorial boards of *Journal of Applied Geography* and *International Journal for Arts and Humanities Computing*. Dr. Harris has edited several books, including *Spatial and Digital Humanities Series*, and published numerous papers in journals.



Abstract

Conceptualizing the Spatial Humanities and Humanities GIS

The emergence of the spatial humanities has been spurred by the recognition of the potential contribution of GIS to humanities scholarship. To date this contribution has been heavily focused on mapping applications and limited GIS functionality and has been generally driven by an emphasis on technique and method. For obvious reasons, not least the seeming uncomfortable juxtaposition of a positivist science with humanist traditions, the interface between GIS and the humanities has focused on where the strengths of the disciplines are currently best maximized – the low hanging fruit. This presentation firstly discusses the diverse conceptual and methodological challenges facing the fusion of spatial science and the humanities and the underlying, but often unacknowledged, role of geographical space as a conceptual framework in the humanities. Secondly, the paper explores ways in which these conceptual challenges might be exploited in terms of where the interface between GIS and the humanities and between humanists and GIS scientists might be developed further. Opportunities are outlined in which the data rich humanities and the geographically oriented spatial sciences might collaborate conceptually, methodologically, and technically in ways that brings closer collaboration between the GIScience and the humanities communities.