Louisiana State University's CADGIS team applied a multi-disciplinary method using FAST software on their Dell PDAs … deploying electronic data forms for rapid data collection, digital photo attachment and GPS information in several New Orleans neighborhoods. Data is downloaded in CADGIS' Baton Rouge lab, exported to several reporting and mapping applications, as well as shared with other academic departments involved in post-Katrina research projects.

RAPID DATA COLLECTION, DATA SHARING AT L.S.U.

Multi-disciplinary approach to Katrina research projects

Situation

Traditionally, university research projects involve reams of paper forms that require many hours of data entry, re-entry, printing and filing. In most cases, the printed reports remain in the boxes or cabinets … the data isn't shared or used as it could have been. Following hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the CADGIS lab at LSU decided to capture research data on New Orleans historical / cultural preservation with the latest mobile technologies, and further, to make that data available to other departments within LSU.

Application

LSU's CADGIS lab, under the direction of Dr. Barrett Kennedy, comprises design, art and anthropology. Its focus in New Orleans included studies of historical, cultural and community preservation and recovery in the Lakeview and Holy Cross neighborhoods – nearly 2500 historic structures. To collect data quickly, then report and map the data, CADGIS used FAST Designer on its laptops and Dell PDAs running FAST PDA in the field. The research team captured digital photos with their Ricoh cameras, GPS points and a wealth of condition data via FAST data collection forms. Back at the CADGIS lab, data was downloaded for instant reports and maps.

Results

"A critical element of this data is the ability to share with other disciplines at LSU," noted Dr. Kennedy. "Researchers in sociology can access and extend what we've already collected." LSU's CADGIS team has been successful developing a rapid-response, GIS-based solution for managing cultural heritage resource data and using GeoAge's FAST software to integrate that data with natural resource data for more effective disaster response, mitigation, and recovery actions. According to Dr. Kennedy, "We're confident that LSU's ongoing research efforts will spawn significant opportunities to develop efficient, cost-effective, integrated approaches to future natural and cultural resource management situations."

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