Facing the Future: Encouraging Critical Cartographic Literacies In Indigenous Communities

Issue Date
2005-01-01

Author
Johnson, Jay T.
Louis, Renee Pualani
Pramono, Albertus Hadi

Publisher
University of British Columbia, Okanagan

Type
Article

Article Version
Scholarly/refereed, publisher version

Published Version
http://www.acme-journal.org/volume4-1.html

Abstract
As Indigenous academics researching and participating with various mapping initiatives, we have began to perceive that while many Indigenous communities have a long history of using Western cartographic techniques, including GIS, in their efforts to establish land claims, map culturally important sites and protect community resources, they were not critically aware of the science with which they are engaged. We have established our goal to assist and encourage the development of a critical literacy in cartography within Indigenous communities. We use the term literacy not to imply an ability to read and write, rather we are engaging the part of the word’s etymology which recognizes having competence in a system of knowledge. Western cartography is a complex knowledge system with a long history, much of its last 500 years being involved in furthering the colonial exploits of European crowns. Using the work of Paulo Freire (2000) on critical consciousness as a foundation, we have taken this concept a step further to describe a critical cartographic literacy which recognizes that as J. B. Harley states, “[m]aps are never value-free images… [c]artography can be ‘a form of knowledge and a form of power’ (1988).” Our article explores our development of a critical cartographic consciousness in order to aid Indigenous communities in how they engage with one of the most prevalent informational technologies currently in use in many of these communities’ modern cartography/GIS.

Description
This is the publisher's version, also available electronically from http://www.acme-journal.org/volume4-1.html.

URI
http://hdl.handle.net/1808/15852

ISSN
1492-9732

Collections
Geography & Atmospheric Science Scholarly Works [165]
Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies Scholarly Works [742]

Citation
A strong critical thinking pedagogy that encourages students' critical knowledge, skills, and dispositions may improve students' academic success while encouraging those abilities needed for transfer and for competency in the workplace. Elder (2007) contends, however, that traditional education is not nurturing the intellectual capabilities needed for personal and academic success.