

As technology advances every single day there are new processes and procedures that change right along with the technology. In the GIS / SaaS industry, individuals like myself do not shift and adapt quickly enough to updated technical processes/procedures in line with new technology, we can miss the mark.

### **What happens when we miss the mark?**



Spatial data does not get fully and accurately developed, which decreases its overall quality little by little and greatly as a whole over time.

In this article, I want to highlight why I harp so much on commanding high-quality spatial data during its development to ensure the best results in its ensuing use and application.

One reason is maps are easily trusted. Think of it this way: Prior to geospatial technology, traveling between states required the use of a map to avoid getting lost. The same thing applies when trying to map out spatial data quality. Everything is measured by rules and other guidelines. Lastly, the knowledge you gain from maps originates from the perspective of the map creator based upon their own studies and firsthand experiences within the geography they have mapped.”



Second, maps can be easy to make. As the saying goes, a straight line is the quickest way from one point to another. Science agencies are still known for creating traditional paper maps. However, many organizations have shifted from the creation of traditional paper maps to a reliance on web map platforms, given that a plethora of web maps are made daily because they have become easier to generate.

With access to more web-based geospatial data and maps via platforms like ArcGIS Online, it is more simple now to create a map, share the findings, and stand-up multimedia story maps and dashboards. Most anyone can access this information now on mediums like Survey 123 and Naturalist.



Third, maps can make “fun” posts believable. Maps are fun and very interesting to most people. However, some maps are dangerous because they reinforce the notion that a story that includes maps and graphics is true even when the story is completely made up

Fourth, maps model reality. I want to clarify that maps are not reality, but only representations of facts. We often ask ourselves is it really a line or is it really a zone and how should we decipher uncertainty and scale considerations on mapped data?

Also, one must also be critical of imagery as it may look like a true representation of the surface of Earth but in a specific part of the electromagnetic spectrum.



Lastly, we must look at ourselves as potential map makers. We are no longer just using maps to get from one destination to another but creating our own maps to track certain data. We will quickly become rather fond of and attached to our own data, but even our own data needs to be examined rigorously.

Hopefully, you have a deeper greater understanding of the utter importance of having high-quality spatial data, as well as the practicality and strong utility of creating your own maps to prevent the loss of crucial information. Essentially, the data creator knows their own data and its sources the best, This is an ideal configuration for the successful resolution of any more complex spatial problems tied to a map and the spatial data it portrays.

Read my previous article on [The Mythical Man Month](#).

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