



# An ArcView® tool for computing accessibility times

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This work relates to the PE-3 project Methodologies for integrating data across geographic scales in a data rich environment. Examples from Honduras. PIs. Ron Knapp and Gregoire Leclerc.

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Activity 2.5 Compose a comprehensive transport map showing all communications for sample sites, including time to market

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Summary

Accessibility has social, economic and environmental dimensions and can be seen both as a pressure on existing natural resources and as a key factor in the development process 102792

This report shows how we have created an accessibility extension to a common GIS package. This extension allows users to create and explore a variety of accessibility indicators using a grid based cost-distance algorithm. The users will be able to use their own data but will be guided as to the most appropriate data sources for the cost-distance process.

Following the cost-distance calculation the users will be able to analyse not only the travel cost maps but also the allocation of services and least cost paths to services

The extension allows users to explore accessibility to any type of point type target, e.g. agricultural market, viable ports for export, or seed distribution centres. They will also have the flexibility to explore different scenarios such as the season (and its implications on ease of travel) and disaster type events (such as loss of infrastructure due to flooding, earthquakes or landslides).

#### Introduction

Transportation is a critical function for an economy as it affects the movement of people, goods and services, and development. In countries such as Honduras a complex transportation network permeates the countryside with paths for walking, paths for horses and donkeys, single lane seasonal roads that take *chivas* (buses that often take regional and nationall farmers and their produce to market), one and two lane all-weather gravel roads, local surfaced roads, regional and national surfaced roads, and motorways or freeways with dividers separating the carriageways. In all there are more than six transport classes. Each of these has typical speed of travel associated with it, which can be adjusted to take into account slope the type of vehicle traversing it rainfall over a 2.3 or 7 day period for an adjustment for congestion. In the end it is possible to work out how long it takes to get from anywhere on the map to the nearest market town or hospital or school using a particular vehicles that the taken to reach a desired location can be generally referred to as its accessibility.

Accessibility can be defined as the ability for interaction or contact with sites of economic or social opportunity, (Deichmann 1998), however there are a multitude of ways in which this intuitive concept has been expressed in the literature. Goodall (1987) defines accessibility as the ease with which a location may be reached from other locations, and Geertman (1995) states that the concept of accessibility can be used in rural development policy as an indicator or rural deprivation and as a variable on location analysis.

Over the last ten years there has been a growing awareness that rural accessibility concernsmore than just roads, (Barwell 1996) Reports and surveys carried out in developing regions paint a picture of rural isolation and unproductive use of limited resources, in which the farmer largely inhabits a walking world. In his introduction to *Transport and the Village*, Cleaver states that

It is clear that the extremely poor state of off the road transport system in Africa acts as a powerful brake on agricultural productivity and growth improved accessibility will reduce the economic costs of moving goods from local markets and ease the barriers to social facilities. This will contribute to economic growth and enhance social well-being

But before national governments can provide environments conducive to the development of local infrastructure, there is a need for a model which can incoroporate the local environmental factors which define rural *inaccessibility*. Also any model should be flexible enough not only to quantify time and cost of travel but also infrastructure inprovement (or degredation) scenarios to be created and evaluated

Clearly there are different levels of infrastructure availability, transport availability, and many different environmental effects, and economic considerations. For example it would be impossible to apply the same model of rural accessibility to Sub Saharan West Africa and Central American Hillsides, but any model should be capable of incorporating all of these factors in a way which is not only sensible and geographically sensitive but also educational and explanatory

#### **Background and Justification**

Spatial accessibility is determined by geographic location in relation to target locations, and by the transportation facilities that are available to reach those destinations. Accessibility is also influenced by social factors such as knowledge and information and by economic factors since the use of transport and communication facilities is usually associated with some monetary cost. Although it is difficult to incorporate these economic factors explicitly in formal models, the selective weighting of one market can imply the social and economic dimensions over another.



In public planning, an important objective is the equal provision of services for all people and in all parts of a country. For example, the population of a country or region should have similar access to public services, independent from their location of residence. Poor infrastructure and consequently limited accessibility implies fewer opportunities for improving economic status, health or social standing Ravallion (1996), for example, speaks of a spatial poverty trap, that may prevent the poor from breaking out of local level constraints.

Operational quantitative measures of accessibility are therefore useful in policy analysis where the focus is on service provision, for example, in the health sector. Other areas in which accessibility is important are economic applications, and, in fact, many of the operational measures of accessibility have first been developed for labor market research and retail analysis.

Geographical information systems (GIS) lend themselves naturally to the computation of accessibility indicators GIS can represent networks, villages or facilities and provide functions to compute distances and to define relationships among spatial objects. Consequently, certain accessibility measures can be computed using commercial packages such ArcView®

However, there is a distinct lack of any step by step, or easy to use models to develop transport maps, accessibility surfaces and the economic catchment areas of towns and markets. This is a strange omission from the planners toolbox, when accessibility is considered such a fundamental indicator of economic potential and an undeniable pressure on ecological systems. One possible explanation is that accessibility is so poorly defined, may people talk about accessibility and there are many differing opinions as to what it actually is. With so many differing definitions prehaps we should not be so suprisied that there are few tools and methods available

#### Methodology

To begin with, it is necessary to clarify some of the terminology that will be used in this model Accessibility is calculated on a *friction surface*. A friction surface consists of a regular two dimensional grid where each cell in the grid represents either a transport route such as roads, railway lines, tracks, or navigable rivers, or relatively inaccessible land and water bodies.

Different types of transport infrastructure have different characteristics. A surfaced road, for example, allows faster travel speed than a dirt road. In practice, it is therefore not enough to measure the *distance* of a road connection between two points. Instead, a measure of travel *cost* is preferable. This cost can be measured in monetary terms or as *travel time*. As will be discussed later in this section the cost to travel across different types of land can be easily estimated.



Sources (points of interest) such as villages, hospitals, or schools are usually located on the transport network and can therefore be represented in another grid as cells that have a certain characteristic. This characteristic could be the village's population, the hospital's number of doctors or beds, or the number of teachers at a school. If we are simply interested in is the presence or absence of a point of interest, then all points can have the same value.

The underlying theory is outlined in Figure 1, adapted from the Arc Info® and ArcView® 3 0a Help Documents

#### Function

**COSTDISTANCE** - Calculates for each cell the least-accumulative-cost distance over a cost surface to a source cell or a set of source cells

#### Usage

Output grid = COSTDISTANCE (markets, friction, backlink, catchment)

#### Arguments

Markets - A grid that identifies those cells which represent markets, to which a least accumulated cost distance for every cell is calculated

friction - A grid defining the impedance or cost to move through each cell. The value at each cell location represents the cost per unit distance for moving through the cell. Each cell location value is multiplied by the cell resolution (while also compensating for diagonal movement) to obtain the total cost of passing through the cell. You cannot have a negative cost

Backlink - The back link grid contains values from 0 through 8, which defines the direction along the least accumulative cost path to reach a market. If the path is to pass into the right neighbor, the cell will be assigned the value 1', 2' for the lower right diagonal cell and continuing clockwise. The value 0' is reserved for source cells

catchment - the name of the output cost allocation grid. The cost allocation grid identifies for each cell, which market would require the least accumulative cost to reach, i,e the catchment area of each market

Figure 1 The COSTDISTANCE function, as stated in the ArcInfo® Help-Documents

From the cell perspective, the objective of the cost functions is for each cell location in the analysis window, to determine the least costly path to reach a source. Each cell will need to determine the least accumulative cost path to a source, the source that allows for the least cost path and the least cost path itself. Cost distance functions apply distance in cost units, not in geographic units.



The cost grid can be a single grid which is generally the result from the composite of multiple grids. The units that are assigned to the cost grid can be any type of cost desired. The dollar cost, time, energy expended, or a unitless system which derives its meaning relative to the cost assigned to other cells. The cost values assigned to each cell are per-unit distance measures for the cell. That is, if the cell size is expressed in meters, the cost assigned to the cell is the cost necessary to travel one meter within the cell. If the resolution is 50 meters, the total cost to travel either horizontally or vertically through the cell would be the cost assigned to the cell times the resolution.

$$total cost = cost \times 50$$

To travel diagonally through the cell, the total cost would be 1 414 times the cost of the cell times the cell resolution

# total diagonal cost = $1.414 \times \cos t \times 50$

A cost path consists of sequentially connected links that provide the route for each cell location to reach a source. A cost path distance (or cost distance) from any cell to a source is the accumulative cost of all links along the path for the cell to reach the source cells. There are many possible paths to reach each source cell and there are many paths to reach the many source cells. There is on one least cost path. The least cost path distance from a cell to a source cell is the smallest (or least) cost distance among all cost path distances from the cell to the source cells. Figure 2 graphically describes the input and outputs of the model.

All that is needed to create an accessibility map, and the two optional outputs are

- A point coverage of markets or points of interest
- A grid where each cells value represents the cost of traversing that particular cell

So far the problem seems trivial, them costdistance function is simple in concept and the data requirements are minimal. In fact these are two of the reasons for selecting this type of analysis. However there are several points to note

- 1 You need geographic data that is in an Equal Area Projection, to preserve areal qualities
- 2 You are unlikely to have such a friction surface ready to hand
- 3 The friction surface is totally dependent on the user and purpose, and will possibly change for each differing scenarios, i.e. foot based or vehicle based travel
- 4 The huge amount of preprocessing required to create the two equal area projected grids





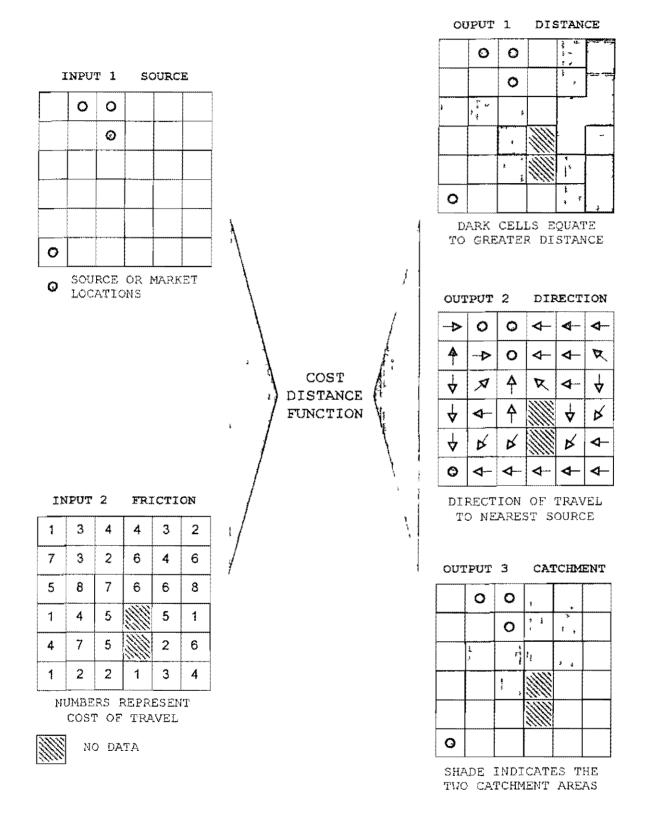


Figure 2 Inputs and Outputs of the COSTDISTANCE function in Arcview® 3.0



#### Interface design

The GIS ArcView® 3, was chosen as the working environment for this activity. Previous work in CIAT had used ArcInfo® and its associated macro language AML® to produce accessibility surfaces, but by version 3, ArcView® had become mature enough to allow development of the interface using its Avenue® scripting language.

The ArcView® extension and accompanying user interface address all of these issues, with a simple definition or concept of accessibility

What is the cost of getting from any location to the nearest point of interest?

This is a fairly general question, where cost can be

- Real cost (cost of transport)
- Perceived cost (cost of transport with other factors)
- Time (simply time taken to get there)
- Perceived time (travel time plus factors introduced by the nature of the transport)
- Any other concept of cost that the user is able to express

A point of interest can be

- A market where goods can be bought or sold (large towns)
- A service industry (so called enterprise zones)
- An attraction (tourist attractions)
- A transport exchange node (ie between road and rail, rail and sea)

The *location* can be anywhere in the area of study

This model uses purely geographic data to create accessibility models. There is no explicit accounting for social or economic factors, although it is very easy to include such factors in the model. The following section is a step by step introduction to the accessibility interface. The appendix contains step by step snapshots of the interface in action.

# Step by step guide through the interface

# 1 Set your work directory

The process of creating an accessibility surface is not only computer memory intensive, but can also use a lot of disk space with temporary files. Make sure you set a work directory on a disk with plenty of space.

#### 2 Create a view

Open a new view within ArcView where the input datasets will be visualised

## 3 Add friction coverages to the view

Here you will start to add coverages and grids that will eventually combine to make a friction surface

#### 4 Add a Road map

There are two essential coverages you will need to build a friction surface. The first one is a land transport network, usually road a road map but it could also be rail or a combination or both

# 5 Add a Boundary map

A boundary coverage is required to act as a barrier to the Costdistance function. This prevents the algorithm calculating costs in area outside the are of interest.

# 6 Option to add a river, land-cover, urban-area, slope or barrier map

Additionally, if it is relevant to your study you can include any and all of these coverages and incorporate them into your friction surface

#### 7 Add point of interest coverage

When the friction components are complete a point coverage needs to be included to define markets and locations of interest

## 8 Sub select points, (select manually, select by database query, or select by spatial query)

Very often this point coverage is not ideal and may contain too many points or prehaps too few. The interface includes the option to select only the points which are relevant to your study, and to manually create others. Points can be selected by any combination of these three common ArcView select tools, SQL Query, Spatial selection and Table querty.



# 9 Reclass grid coverages into useful classes

The grid components of the friction surface, may contain hundred of values. This stage involves the classification of the grids into useful ranges and is a purely technical stage reflecting the limitations of the software. The reclassification step is strongly recommended, as ArcView will convert the grids to shapefiles, and the fewer the classes contained within each grid, the smaller the shapefile will be

#### 10 Convert grids to shapefiles

As stated in the previous stage, all grids must to be converted to shapefiles, as ArcView cannot project grids

#### 11 Clip all themes to a desired area of interest

Here you have the option to clip all the coverages simultaneously to an area of interest. It is quite possible that each map is from a different source and hence will cover a different extent. Using the data view, you can define an area of interest and the coverages will be clipped accordingly.

#### 12 Project data to Lambert Azimuthal Equal Area Projection

As mentioned earlier, the Costdistance function will only give sensible results if all the data exists in an Equal Area projection. This function will simultaneously reproject all your coverages, and place them in a new view. As mentioned in Appendix B, your dataset must be less than one hemisphere in extent, otherwise the projection will not work. If you want to create an accessibility surface that is greater than one hemisphere, then you are evidently into accessibility in far bigger way than we are!

## 13 Convert shapefiles to grids

Again this is a purely technical stage where we convert the shapefiles back to grids in order to build the friction surface

#### 14 Reclass grids to reflect their friction components

This is possible the most important (certainly the most subjective) part of the model where we need to decide how to define the friction surface. If the friction cost is time, we will need to estimate the time required to traverse 1 cell of each class of road that exists in the road coverage.

For example a 2km resolution road coverage might have 3 classes of road.

Class	Description	
1	Highway	
2	Road	
3	Track	



We estimate the speed by truck, assuming we a e carrying carrying goods to market, to be

Class	Description	Speed
1	Highway	120 km/hr
2	Road	60 km/hr
3	Track	30 km/hr

On a 2km resolution grid we have to reclassify this by converting km/hr into metres per minute (1 km/hr equals 16 667 m/min) The new classes represent the time taken (in minutes) to cross 2km of each road type at the given speed

Old class	Description	Speed	New class
1	Highway	120 km/hr	1
2	Road	60 km/hr	2
3	Track	30 km/hr	4

This estimation has to be repeated for all other optional coverage to For example are rivers barriers (high cost per unit cell) or potential routes (low cost per unit cell). If there is a slope grid, then this acts as a multiplying factor over all other grids. For example getle slopes hardly effect speed of travel, but steep slopes will heavily impede travel over any surface. For example

Old class	Description	New class
1	Slopes of 0 – 5 degrees	1
2	Slopes of 5 – 10 degrees	3
3	Slopes greater than 10 degrees	5

These reclassified grids will be placed in a new view

## 15 Combine grids to create friction surface

This step automatically combines the friction components into one grid, with the following logic

Friction = Slope x [Precidence(Barrier, Road, River Urban, LandCover)]

Where, on a cell by cell basis Barriers have precedence over Roads, Roads have precedence over Rivers, etc. etc.



# 16 Run cost distance function, with two optional outputs

Here we can select the optional outputs of

- Direction to nearest point of interest
- Allocation zones for each area of interest

## 17 Reproject outputs back to original format

When the CostDistance function is complete, the outputs will be projected back into the original projection (this step also includes the hidden functions of making all the grids integer grids, converting them the shapefiles before the projection, and reconverting them to grids after projection<sup>1</sup>)

Finally we have created an accessibility surface containing information on

- Time/distance to market
- Direction of travel to reach nearest market
- The catchment area ( the economic equivalent of a watershed) or each market

It is a relatively simple task to calibrate the time to market outure by questioning local farmers for small sites and by general concensus when determining travel times across countries or continents. The model has been run on sites as small as the three Honduran test sites (10km by 10km), up to Latin America from Mexico to Argentina (excluding the Caribbean), and calibration has proved easy, and in most cases the original estimates input into the model proved to be accurate enough without rerunning the model. So it was seen that the model was not only simple in it's concept but also applicable across a huge range of scales, although there are issues of border crossings and international trade and tax considerations.

#### **Examples**

#### Travel time and communication links for sample sites

Please see the accompanying poster presentation. Mapping Accessibility

# Mitch before and after, and applications in resource managment

Please see the accompanying poster presentation 'Mapping the effects of natural diasters

#### Accessibility to services within Honduras

From the examples on the following pages we see that over 80% (over one million) of the rural child population is more than one hour away from the nearest school, and over 50% (700,000) are more than two hours away. For health care the figures for the entire rural population are one hour, 90% (two million) and two hours, 70% (one and a half million)!



# Accessibility to the 44 hospitals in Honduras (recorded in the 1988 population census)

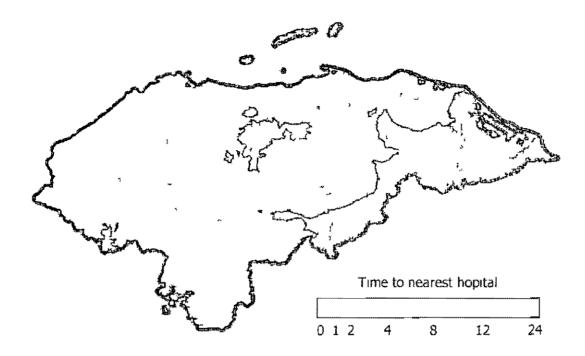


Figure 3 Accessibility Time to nearest hospital or health centre
Figure 5 Accessibility Time to nearest hospital or health centre, and population centres **Next page** 

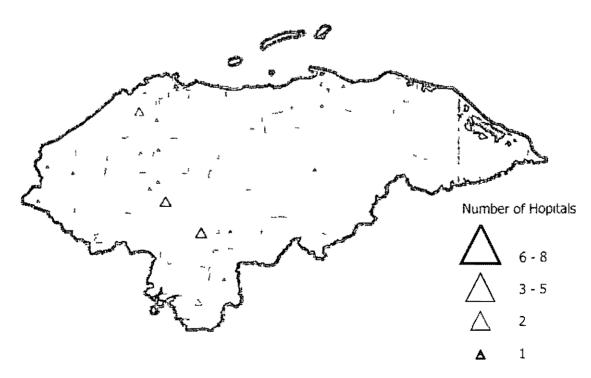
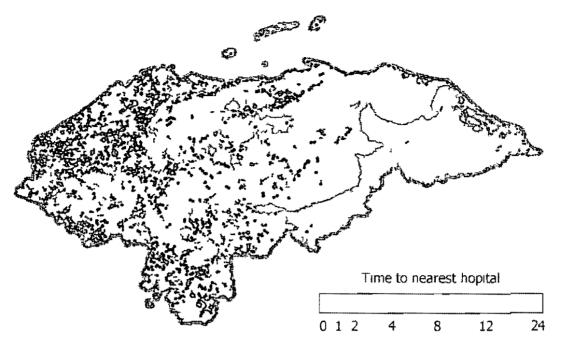
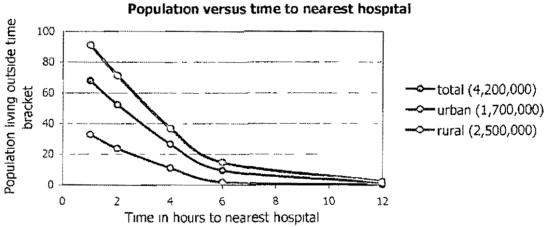
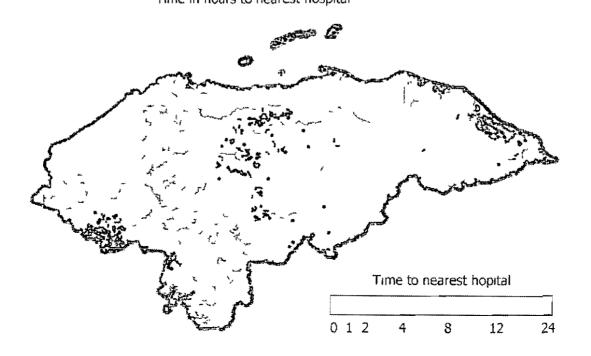


Figure 4 Accessibility Distribution of hopitals in Honduras, and their catchment areas Figure 6 Accessibility Population within time bands to nearest hospital **Next page** 











# Accessibility to the 115 schools on Honduras (recorded in the 1988 poulation census)

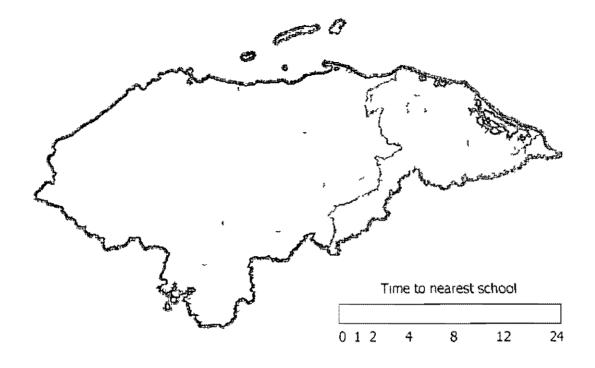


Figure 7 Accessibility Time to nearest school or university
Figure 9 Accessibility Time to nearest school or university, and population centres Next page

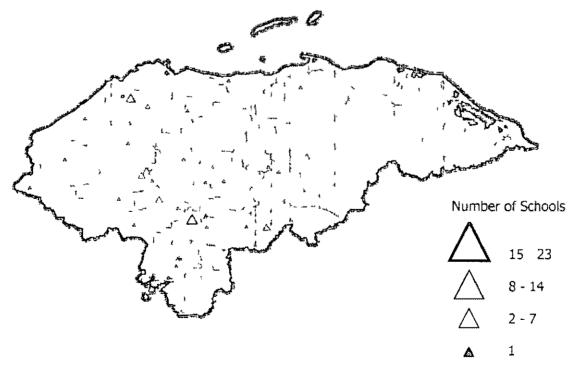
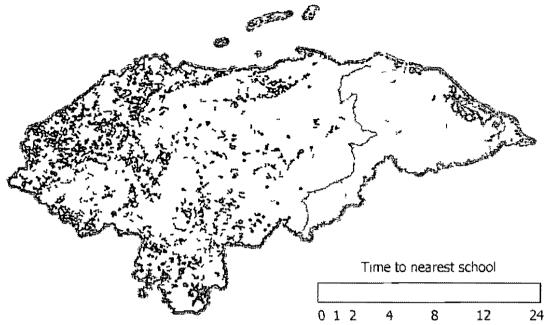
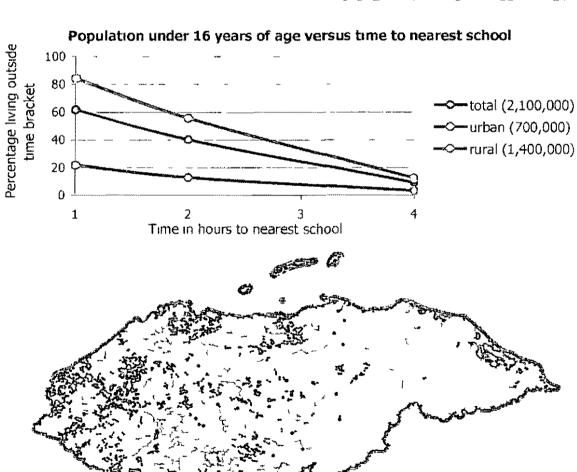


Figure 8 Accessibility Distribution of schools in Honduras, and their catchment areas Figure 10 Accessibility Population under 16 within time bands to nearest school **Next page** 





Time to nearest school

8

12

24

0 1 2





#### **Discussion & Conclusions**

# Assessment of population pressure on limited resources

The examples of health-care and educational catchment areas paint a stark picture of the pressure upon Honduran social and educational resources. Both are seen as strong indicators of general welfare of the population. The ability to quickly assess and map these phenomena is unquestionable. Admittedly, the reliance here on census records over 10 years old is suspect, but the reasoning is valid, simply update the data and repeat the process. This concept leads to other possibilities in the realm of resource allocation.

#### Resource Allocation Potential

The location allocation and management of facilities such as schools, hopitals and industres is globally a multir billion dollar industry. This model offers a simple method for assessing a range of socio economic impacts of one site location over another.

#### Potential for visualisation and psuedoquantitative assessment of policies

As highlighted in the simplistic scenarios pre and post mitch, there is great potential for the mapping of the effects of natural disaters and policy decisions, before they occur. It is only with hindsight after Hurricane Mitch that this potential of the model was realised, but the results generted from this analysis have been put to good use and were included in the CIAT CD-ROM Atlas of Honduras for distribution to aid agencies, governments and other interested parties in the wake of this national disater.

Further more it is possible to incorporate farming practises into the analysis to estimate impact of one infrastructure deviceopment policy over another based on the change on accessibility to local farmers and their produce. Such policies could influence the choice of one market crop over another or the movement from one market to another.

#### Economic catchment areas and areas of economic influence

It is worth paying attention to one of the optional outputs of of the model, but potentially one of the most interesting and powerful coverages it is possible to generate within a GIS environment

The delienation of the catchment potential of each market is of unquestionable value to decision makers and planners. In the previous example it was shown how the impact of bridge destruction could force a farmer to move to a new unknown market, and how the option of bridge reconstruction (under differing policies) could be visualised and impact of the construction policies assessed. Considering the impact that GIS watershed delienation has had on hydrology, it is possible to see a very bright future indeed for economic cathement areas, since they have the added flexibility to be generated on demand for differing scenarios, different scales. Indeed they promise to be a partial solution to the Modifiable Areal Unit Problem (discussed in part 1 of this report) as they allow the user to predefine areas based on economic and physical criteria and to then aggregate data accordingly using user-defined units more suitable to the



purpose than other pre-concieved administrative bouldaries. Part 2 of this report contains an example of using hierarchical market definitions to aggregate census data.

# User friendly interface development

Producing the interface required about 6 months of work, from conception, design, construction, testing and finally documenation. Accessibility is being used more and more frequently as an input to other models in CIAT that the time and effort spent constructing the interface was deemed worthwhile.

#### Impact assessment

Through ESRI's web site <a href="http://www.esri.com">http://www.esri.com</a> it is possible to distribute the interface to a wider audience and to gauge the impact of the work, from the number of times the interface is downloaded, and the feedback which is received

We also plan to make the interface (complete with documentation) available via CIAT's web site <a href="http://www.ciat.cgiar.org">http://www.ciat.cgiar.org</a>, again requesting information from the visitors who wish to download

Another aspect of this work, is the learning experience gained from building an interface such as this From meetings last year with other CSI (Consortium for Spatial Information) of which CIAT is the coordinating member, the interface will be made available to all consortium members and a personal report from the two developers will be included, describing the difficulties encountered and obstacles overcome on the way to creating the final product. It is hoped that such experiences can be shared and learned from by other consortium members, leading to improved understanding, improved co-operation and sharing of ideas and products in the future





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