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11-10-1999

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Recommended Citation

Druchniak, Carmelle, "Geography Awareness Week Includes GIS Open House" (1999). *UNH Today*. 3179.
<https://scholars.unh.edu/news/3179>

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Geography Awareness Week Includes GIS Open House

By [Carmelle Druchniak](#)
UNH News Bureau

DURHAM, N.H. -- Confused about GIS? Well, some overnight delivery services use GIS to track and deliver packages. Your local planning commission uses GIS to evaluate land use proposals. Those driving directions you got from a Web site? Compliments of GIS.

Learn more about geographic information systems (GIS) at an open house at the University of New Hampshire Friday, Nov. 19, held in conjunction with National Geography Awareness Week (Nov. 15-19).

The open house, sponsored by the [UNH Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans and Space](#), is set for 2 to 4 p.m. in the second floor atrium of Morse Hall. It is free and open to the public.

GIS is a computer-based tool for mapping and analyzing objects and events. It combines the power of a database with the visualization capabilities offered by maps. Businesses, schools, governments and organizations use GIS for a variety of applications, as it provides the power to solve complicated problems, experiment with scenarios and present ideas.

Fay Rubin believes the day will come when GIS technology will be available as consumer-friendly software, just as word-processing programs are now in widespread use. Rubin manages New Hampshire GIS (NH GRANIT), a cooperative effort to create, maintain, and make available a statewide digital geographic database serving information to state, federal, regional and local decision-makers. The system includes a geographic database, hardware and software to build, manage and access the database, and a staff of experts knowledgeable in GIS, remotely sensed imagery and computer analysis.

"The GRANIT System has allowed us to respond to the needs of decision-makers at all governmental levels quickly and effectively," says Rubin. "Over the past decade we have worked with towns, regional planning agencies and state agencies on a broad range of planning and environmental issues that require the analysis of geographic data."

Along with Rubin's group at the [Complex Systems Research Center](#), other campus groups utilizing GIS include Cooperative Extension, the Thompson School of Applied Science and the Department of Natural Resources.

UNH recently was cited from among more than 200,000 organizations worldwide for its work in geographic information system (GIS) technology. The Special Achievement in GIS Award was presented to the university by the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) at its international conference.

For more information on the open house, call the UNH Complex Systems Research Center at 603-862-1792.

November 10, 1999

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